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# A VALIANT WOMAN

A CONTRIBUTION TO  
THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

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# A VALIANT WOMAN

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

BY

M. F.

AUTHOR OF "THE JOURNAL OF A RECLUSE"

Mary Fisher

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TO THE TEACHERS OF AMERICA, IN LOVING  
AND GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THE VALIANT  
WOMAN WHO WAS ONE OF THE BEST OF THEM



## INTRODUCTION

“**T**HERE are, on the face of the earth, imaginations without number which pass through life in like manner as the deaf and dumb, and are, for all that, none the less beautiful. They are like the flowers which we see in the distant south. There was a great probability that no eye should ever see them. I am sure that, likewise, there are hidden lives which are charming.” So wrote Ximènes Doudan, the charm of whose own life has rescued it from obscurity; and the following pages are written in a loving and reverent desire to lift into the light another of those beautiful, obscure lives which persist in the memory of those who have known them as a source of pure delight and high aspiration.

I am not at liberty to give the name of the valiant woman whose memory persists with me, nor to give any biographical details which might lead to her recognition. I can only give the pure spirit of her — distill, as it were, the perfume from the flower whose name and form and color are to remain unknown. But it is the perfume that gave persistent value to the flower, and having that, we need concern ourselves



but little with the soil in which it grew, or the culture it received at foreign hands.

It is true, as Balzac says, that "the multitude generally prefers the abnormal force which bursts its bounds to the balanced force which persists, having neither the time nor the patience to verify the immense power concealed under a uniform appearance"; but it is not the multitude for whom this book is written. It is written for those to whom life puts serious questions; for whom seeming and being are not necessarily the same, and whose keen insight can make them feel how a life which in its bare simplicity would seem to most men and women absolutely bereft of charm, because wanting the consolations of vanity, may stand, nevertheless, for the solution of life's greatest problem,—How shall I make life worth living by preserving in myself the freshness of the heart, and increasing its power of unselfish love?

But the book is especially written for those to whom the care of children and the young has been confided — to mothers and teachers. It is they who will find in it a spring of living water in the thoughts and feelings of one who was a mother in the highest sense, a mother of souls, and a teacher all her life, because the gift to teach was her birthright which she never bartered for any mess of pottage. Unfortunately I have been obliged to illustrate her life-

work by a detailed account of our educational system, because it was so constant a subject of her thought; and I fear that I have submerged her in this account, instead of making it subordinate to her, as I most sincerely would have preferred to do. For this reason I have given the book the sub-title, *A Contribution to the Educational Problem*.

The word "contribution" shows that I have no intention of implying that the problems have been solved. It simply means that the book contains a frank and sincere discussion of the many questions that vex us in the schoolroom, and that they have been as profusely illustrated by valuable quotations from original sources as the scope of the book would allow; for I believe with Jean Paul that not a single good observation or rule on the subject should be lost, because it happens to lie imprisoned in a huge volume or flutters about in a pamphlet of one leaf. I have approached these questions, not through the avenues of psychology, pedagogy, and philosophy, but through the well-trodden paths of experience and observation, so that the book can be read without a dictionary of technical terms. It can be understood without torturing new meanings into old, well-known words, and it is not afraid to criticise where to praise would be cowardice. It does not seek applause, nor does it fear condemnation. It wishes simply to find

its own, to cheer the solitary thinker in the hours when he feels most solitary, by the image of one who peopled solitude with kindness and thought; and it would speak the language of sincerity to the ears that can recognize it.

I have wished to say of the exquisite woman whose lifelong friendship it was my privilege to enjoy: You must know my friend as I knew her. You must hear her talk, you must feel the wholesome influence of her presence and enrich your life with a rare and lasting friendship; for such women as she do not wholly die. They leave traces of themselves wherever they have been,—a subtle perfume of character that sweetens the air like the odor of violets.

Yet she was the last woman in the world to think that there was anything extraordinary in herself, or to feel that her individual utterances of her opinions were worth preserving; and the only infidelity to her of which I have been guilty is that of preserving her letters when she wished them destroyed. But she had a firm belief in her convictions on many subjects relating to the education of the young, and would have been glad to see them generally accepted. And since she expressed these convictions in a simple, forcible language entirely her own, I have felt it no injustice to her memory to transcribe them as she wrote them, taking it upon myself to develop the



ideas in the direction which she indicated. Conscious that these extracts from her letters are to a great extent impersonal, and that where they are not, they can only reflect credit upon her, and enhance the value of her teaching by showing that she lived what she taught, I have forgiven myself for the infidelity, knowing well that she would have been generous enough to forgive me, too.

The world has nothing to lose and everything to gain by the preservation to its memory of its noblest characters, whether they live and die in a blaze of glory, or live and die in quiet obscurity illuminating no other circle than the limited one in which they daily moved. And it seems to me that of the two, the lives of our mute, inglorious great are a more valuable stimulus than those of the illustrious, because it is not given to us all to follow the flight of the winged souls, but we may all walk side by side with the strong and faithful, who, on the broad and dusty highway, have found life sweet and helped to make it so.



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# A VALIANT WOMAN

## CHAPTER I

### THE TEACHER

MARCUS AURELIUS thanked the gods that he had not frequented public schools, but had had good teachers at home, and that when he had a mind to look into philosophy, he met neither with a pedant nor a knave to instruct him, and did not spend too much time in voluminous reading, chopping logic, or natural philosophy.

I, too, in my humble station, can thank the gods that though I went to the public schools, I had at the most impressionable age of childhood my instruction from a woman of rare superiority, whose friendship, continuing through my youth and maturity, has been the chief ornament and delight of my life. The greatest thing that can happen to any human soul is to have felt the presence of excellence, to have seen incorporated the highest virtues and to have loved them passionately. It is to be made rich for all time with an imperishable wealth. It is to be preserved from loneliness in the most perfect solitude.



It is to have touched reality and to be preserved from the doubt that belittles and scorns humanity. It is to remain fixed in moral values when the winds of diverse doctrines blow all the tattered faiths of mankind into shreds. It is to keep alive an exquisite hope in the future of the human race, climbing along its rugged path of progress with so many stumbles, yet showing us here and there a vigorous soul that can walk upright and unaided. It is to have known one of the choristers of that choir invisible who have made undying music in the world, and to carry in the memory some of that music's sweetest strains.

I remember but indistinctly any teacher that I ever had before or after I became the pupil of this valiant woman, but I have only to shut my eyes, and the little room in which she taught rises as distinctly before me as if I had seen it yesterday. Yonder are the numerous rows of narrow wooden desks scarred and marked by many a careless knife and thoughtless pencil; the chalk-covered blackboards; the grimy paper and the smoke-darkened ceiling; the small, raised platform in front designed for the teacher's desk and chair; the huge rusty cannon-stove in the middle of the room; at the back, the long, low, narrow wooden bench on which the daily recitations took place, and, turning all the dinginess and bareness of the room into cheerful brightness, the

teacher who presided over it,—the perfect teacher, the center of light and love, the soul that lived in realities and not in the shams of things.

Of medium height, with an admirable figure which fashion had never deformed, holding herself erect without stiffness, looking you frankly in the face with bright gray eyes whose keenness never excluded kindness, she seemed to radiate an atmosphere of good will and high purpose. Her dark brown hair was brushed smoothly back from her temples and coiled in a loose knot at the back of her head. Her dress of dark cotton in summer, in winter of plain gray or black wool, was made with extreme simplicity, always in the same manner, and its only ornament was a cameo brooch at the throat. To have wished in any way to attract attention by her dress or ornament was as much beneath her noble dignity as it would have been openly to demand it.

I have called her the perfect teacher; by that, I mean that she was first of all a strong personality, a woman who had placed no interpreter between herself and life, but had drawn from it directly her conclusions and opinions. And I mean great flexibility,—the power to yield one's self without losing one's self; the power to confront new situations without surprise or embarrassment. I mean that intuitive human sympathy which understands without ask-

childish envy or childish heartbreak results, all unconscious that family gifts are placed on the tree, who knows anything about it? Children think many things of which they are ashamed to speak, and who thinks it of any importance whether the ideal of life awakened by observation be, or be not, to break these social barriers and to get and to have in one's turn?

This is where we were when she came, and she was to teach us that there is not only more of the world than that which we saw from our back yard, but that it stretched far over the other side of the garden and beyond the minister's field,—a wonderful world with echoes that could reach us in music and pictures and stirring verse, and thoughts that rouse like a trumpet-note. And she was to teach us that getting and having are the poorest uses of life, unless it be the getting and having of the invisible wealth of heart and brain. She came to say to us, "I know no classes, only individuals, and rank everybody by character," and to teach us that a lily may spring from a muck heap and a nettle grow in a palace yard. She came to lift the lowly, and to humble the haughty by showing us the incalculable value of an enlightened mind. She came to teach us what Montaigne calls the greatest thing in the world, namely, how to belong to one's self,—to have freedom and strength and resourcefulness within us.



And how did she do it? That is an important question,—the most important we can ask just now, for to put it in an impersonal form, it runs: What must we do to educate the young in the very best way?

Remember that she had absolutely no external advantages in the way of laboratories, models, pictures, books, and all the varied and rich equipment of the modern schoolroom. She had the four bare walls, and the scarred benches crowded with some forty or fifty children, varying in age from eleven to twenty. She had one assistant; and she was expected to teach reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, geography, history, the rudiments of the natural sciences, and Latin, if there was a demand for it. She had taken upon herself the care of a motherless niece, and the Latin class consisted of this niece and a tall lad who walked in from the country every morning to attend the village school, and to whom Latin seemed a brevet of distinction. But she had one immense thing in her favor. She was hampered neither by a set program, a cut-and-dried scholastic course which she must follow, nor by an officious supervision, ignorant of conditions, which dictated what and how she must teach. She was given absolute liberty. There were the children and a place to meet them, and given hours

ing questions; that keen sense of humor which is not shocked at the crude and the absurd, but with smiling recognition can help laugh it into the finished and the fitting. I mean the gift of those "whose only joy in having is to impart," not in an ostentatious way to display one's own mental riches, but in the only serviceable way which sometimes lies very close to drudgery,—the teaching of the young. But it is the joy in it which is the chief thing, the joy in another's growth. This gift includes immense patience with honest dullness,—not vicious, idle dullness, but the dullness that struggles and works and to which hope is not denied. I mean, too, polished manners,—that indescribable something which gives charm to human intercourse, which veils homeliness of feature and meanness of stature, and makes it possible to say and do even disagreeable and painful things in that acceptable manner that made some one say of Chesterfield, "He kicked me downstairs with such exquisite grace that I thought he was helping me up."

And last of all, I mean health of body and health of mind,—the exquisite poise of equal humor, the cheerful outlook on life, the strength that is not consumed in the schoolroom, but leaves a broad margin for individual growth.

The union of these gifts in one person is so rare

that it may almost be called genius; yet they were united in a remarkable degree in this valiant woman whom no one could ever forget who had once known her. There was in her a certain youthfulness of a perennial type, a wonderful clean-heartedness, a power of deep feeling accompanied by the most tranquil expression of it, and a great natural bias towards truth and beauty.

She came to us in the full strength of early maturity. We were ordinary children in an ordinary little river town of the Middle West. We had no public library, no museum, no traditions of culture. Our intellectual horizon was bounded by the town limits, and having never had an opportunity to compare these limits with anything outside, we thought them extremely wide, and that nothing of much importance could lie beyond them. To be sure, we had our village castes. Wherever the poor and the well-to-do are gathered together, invisible but well-recognized barriers are set up, separating those who have from those who have not. The banker's son does not meet his washwoman's daughter at the village ball, and even Santa Claus has a remarkable sense of these distinctions in his distribution of gifts at the Sunday-school Christmas-tree, and to those who have is liberally given, and to those who have not fall an orange and a small net stocking full of cheap candy. If



set a child to describing a ball, or an apple, or a flower, and then said that all these words which say something about the form, color, taste, smell, or size of the object described, name some quality of it, and are called adjectives; and, therefore, that we cannot say properly that anything smells badly, any more than we can say it tastes sweetly; nor must we say that we "feel badly" for the same reason that we are not describing the action of feeling, but our own condition of health. She hunted down by unrelenting correction every ungrammatical or awkward expression we used, so that every recitation, no matter on what subject, was also a recitation in English grammar; and by clearing our language of ambiguity and incorrectness, she helped us to understand other subjects.

It is probably not an exaggeration to say that half the difficulties which pupils have in mathematics may be set down to their incorrect use of language or their incorrect interpretation of it. To feel clearly the force of every word we use is one of the highest ends of education; for nothing definite or accurate can persist in the mind without this condition. It is a great temptation to omit this vigilance in correction, especially when listening to a mathematical explanation requiring close attention to logical deduction. To interrupt the child is to di-

vert his train of thought; but I believe that though the immediate result may often be disastrous, so far as the problem is concerned, the larger end most assuredly justifies the correction. I have heard a child allowed to speak of the "two angles respectfully," and am sure that it is much more important that he should know the distinction between *respectfully* and *respectively* than that he should know the relation between the two angles, because it is with words and not with angles that he will be most concerned all his life, and he ought never to be allowed to associate wrong ideas with any one of them. The use of the adjective *real* as an adverb has become so common for lack of correction, that even teachers constantly so misuse it, thus spreading the error; while, at the same time, in their efforts to be correct, they censure many a fine old English idiom like "*have got*," for example, evidently ignorant of the fact that every English author whom they put as models into their pupils' hands makes use of it.

The fact is that no one can have a fine sense of the value of words in any language, who is not well read in it; and in the multiplication of things to be learned and the multifarious distractions of modern social life, there are very few who have the leisure to read extensively. Our teacher was one of the few. Along with an unusual critical sense of excellence,



hereditary transmission. Finally, modern science has discovered the magnificent idea of the continuity of creation.' "

This valiant woman herself possessed this searching, open, humble mind, fearlessly accepting what seemed to her truth, whether it flattered humanity or not, dreading nothing more than the fixed deadness of dogma. Her opinions were her own, having grown out of her experience, and she lived them without forcing them upon other people, though silently propagating them by the happy contagion of example. She had grown slowly, symmetrically; she had sloughed many old faiths painlessly, and therefore felt no rancor against them or hatred for them. They fitted her no longer, but they had once belonged to her,—that was all. Why quarrel with those who still clung to them? Besides, it is dangerous to strip them off, before the shivering naked soul has something better in which to clothe itself.

At that time it was the custom to open school in the morning with Bible reading, prayer, and song. To her, this was an expression of human aspiration towards the infinite and the unknown, and I remember with what quiet reverence it was done. The portion to be read was selected from the Psalms, the Proverbs, or sometimes it was the Sermon on the Mount. It was never historical or condemnatory, and no com-

ments were made, and no parade of piety appeared. She liked particularly to read the Twenty-third Psalm, which Henry Ward Beecher called "the nightingale of the psalms, small, of homely feather, singing shyly out of obscurity, but filling the air of the whole world with melodious joy"; and the prayer we daily heard was the prayer Christ taught, "Our Father which art in heaven."

It was a quiet pause before the heat of the day's work. It was a reminder that there is something above us to reverence, something beyond the tangible to love and to hope for, and I think we were better for it. One of the great problems of modern education is how to supply this aspiration, this long, intent look upward, this consciousness of a power and excellence that is not ours, to which we owe submission and reverence. It is in vain to hope that culture will ever be widespread enough to do it. Culture has always been and will always be the privilege of the few, not because opportunities for culture are not general enough, but because the capacity for it is rare. The fact is summed up in the homely proverb, "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." Be very sure that you can't. All you can hope to do is to rub the hair off and make a pigskin purse, and modern education does not even do that. It leaves all the hair on, bristling with importance and imper-

tinence. The Goethean recipe to hear a little song, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words every day, is valuable and effective only in him who has an inborn love of these things, and to whom they are therefore in some sort necessary. But to him who has not this love, but who has heard that there is a sort of distinction in culture and is resolved to have it by going through a set form of mental gymnastics, real culture will always be wanting.

This idea is admirably expressed by Hugo Münsterberg in his book on the Americans. Speaking of the result of the frequent attendance of popular lectures in America, and the importance of the natural attitude of the mind to what is really excellent, he says: "It may be, indeed, that the village population under the influence of the last lecture course is talking about Cromwell and Elizabeth instead of about the last village scandal, but if the way in which it talks has not been modified, one cannot say that a change of topic signifies any elevation of standard. And if, indeed, the village is still to gossip, it will seem to many more modest and more amiable if it gossips about some indifferent neighbor, and not about Cromwell."

Culture, then, is not knowledge, it is not familiarity with beautiful, rare, or costly things. It is the harmony of the soul with what is excellent. It is being



at home with the beautiful. It is to be rich without the possession of things. A pseudo-culture, the result of indiscriminate cramming, is marked by two chief characteristics,—confusion of ideas, and confident ignorance. Now, pure ignorance, wholly untampered with, accompanied by humility, and the power of reverence, does not offend us; on the contrary, it often attracts and rests us, as children do; but ignorance pretending to knowledge and boastful of it, is the most offensive thing in the world, and in attempting to give culture to everybody, our educational system destroys ignorance in its beautiful, complete, white form, and substitutes this nauseous vanity for it.

A child born and brought up in a part of the Orient, where he had never seen snow or winter fogs, when for the first time he saw the misty vapor of a wintry morning all white and dim, asked, as his little face took on an expression of wondering awe, "*Mamma, is it God?*"

This is what I mean by beautiful *white* ignorance, full of reverence and wonder in the presence of what it does not understand; and this is an ignorance which, thanks to a system that aims at omniscience and hits superficiality, cannot anywhere be found in all the length and breadth of our broad, beautiful land. But we have abundance of the other sort, the igno-

rance that thinks it knows all about a subject, because it has heard the name of it; and it is this ignorance which makes us ridiculous in the eyes of the world. As a nation we have a great deal of restless curiosity which passes for intelligence. We want to see the wheels go round in everything; we are capable of dissecting a mite to see how his cheese agrees with him; but when it comes to reverence for what is above us, or to that exquisite delicacy which enables us to distinguish what is really fine from what is coarse and showy, we are, in general, as absolutely wanting as the painted Indian of our prairies, and we merit the scathing rebuke which Ruskin gave us, in one of his admirable letters to the workmen of England.

“You have felt,” he says, “at least those of you who have been brought up in any habit of reverence, that every time when, in this letter, I have used an American expression, or aught like one, there came upon you a sense of sudden wrong, the darting through you of acute cold. I meant you to feel that. It is the new skill they have found there, this skill of degradation. Others they have which other nations had before them, from whom they have learned all they knew, and among whom they must travel to see any human work worth seeing. But this is their specialty, this their one gift to their race—to show men how not to worship, how never to be

ashamed in the presence of anything. But the magic of Zoroaster is the exact reverse of all this, to find the worth of all things and do them reverence."

We need the rebuke, and we should not receive it with derision and self-boasting in the vulgar spirit that says, "We, the younger generation, are ashamed to be ashamed." We should not put forward our furniture and electric lights as an excuse for the shabbiness of our souls and the rudeness of our manners. We should not confound impudence with frankness, nor glibness of tongue with thought. We must not think that culture is something that we can plaster on us as the savage does his paints, or that we can get it in chunks like coal by paying for it in buildings and laboratories, and we must not feel that lawlessness is freedom. "It is not in wishing to recognize nothing superior to ourselves that we are made free," says Goethe, "but, on the contrary, by the reverence for something above us, because in revering it, we lift ourselves up to it, and thus reveal that we ourselves have something higher in us and are worthy to be like it. In my travels, I have often been thrown with North German merchants who thought they were my equals when they seated themselves rudely at my table. By this very action they showed that they were not my equals;



but they would have been, had they known how to treat me properly and value me."

We, too, must be made free in the same way, not by boasting of superiority, but by feeling that it is a privilege to reverence; that it does not show servility but the power of feeling excellence, the power of discriminating between the little and the great, and that not to have this power is an irreparable loss.

It was a deep insight into this fundamental need of the human heart, which made Goethe insist so much upon the teaching of reverence in the model school in *Wilhelm Meister*. Wilhelm, observing now and then a boy who passed on to his work without saluting his overseer, inquired why this was permitted. "It is full of meaning," was the answer, "for it is the greatest punishment we inflict upon our pupils; they are declared unworthy to show reverence, and obliged to exhibit themselves as rude and uncultivated natures."

Have we reversed this method in modern teaching by setting so high a value upon independence and individuality that our manners as well as our ideas have fallen into anarchy? If we cannot hope to reform them by a widespread culture, we can at least reform them to some extent by restoring respect

for age and authority, and teaching compassion and sympathy for what is beneath us. But age and authority must see to it that they are in themselves respectable. Old age ashamed of its gray hairs and apologetic for them, insisting that it is seventy years young, and dreading the word "old" like a winter wind, is not worthy of reverence, but of deep pity; and authority intoxicated with its power and using it basely is beneath contempt.

Our valiant teacher was a woman of real culture, a natural leader. One felt it instinctively in the serenity of her behavior, in the quick decision that answered the need of the moment, in the power of self-possession, in the ability to command while seeming to request, in the comprehensiveness of her intelligence and its broad fund of general information. She was no specialist. The teacher of that time, like the ward school-teacher of the present, was expected to know everything, or at least a little of everything, and having walked in all directions in the field of knowledge, she had a broad horizon. We felt power in her, and we revered and loved her for it.

Nothing escaped her vigilant eye. She felt it her duty to tell us when anything was amiss, and just as she corrected our lapses in grammar, she corrected our lapses in good behavior. She put a stop



to gum-chewing; she directed the yawner to conceal his gaping mouth with his hand; she asked for whom we were mourning when she discovered a black streak under the finger nails; she subdued the high, shrieking voices of the girls, and suppressed whistling indoors among the boys; she required us to stand and to sit erect, and to pass without unseemly hurry and unnecessary noise from room to room; she broke us of the ugly habit of replying with a grunt or a shake of the head for "yes" and "no"; she taught us to say "Thank you" for a service rendered. In short, she made us feel the beauty of courtesy, and she taught us the moral beauty of perfect courage — not only in great things but in little ones: how to subdue physical discomforts, how to meet disagreeable duties and fatiguing tasks, how to tell the truth and hate a lie. If we had a long walk to school in the winter wind, she reminded us of the immense courage of La Salle, starting from Crève Cœur, opposite Peoria, Illinois, to walk to Canada through pathless forests and over pathless plains. She spoke of the beautiful cheerfulness of one who carried sunshine with him wherever he went, who never complained of the wet and cold when he came home, but spoke with gratitude of the cheery warmth into which he entered; who never complained that he was tired, but expressed his joy in the prospect of rest,

thus teaching us that it is better to live in cheerful affirmatives than in dreary negatives.

She extended her solicitous interests as far as personal taste in dress. The tawdry, the gaudy, the superfluous were highly distasteful to her, and here again she taught us that simplicity is the first mark of culture. The barbarous custom of piercing the ears to hang rings in them was then in vogue, and when the girls came to school with swelled, pierced ears and silk threads hanging in them, she quietly asked them if they thought they were any prettier with those threads dangling from their ears. Then followed an earnest, inspiring talk on real beauty. She told us that the first intellectual need of the savage is to be moved through his eyes, hence his attention to personal adornment. And because his tastes are coarse, he must tattoo himself, daub bright colors on his face and body, hang glittering bits of metal in his ears and sometimes in his nose, rob the birds of their brilliant feathers, the animals of their claws, teeth, and furs, and pride himself upon the variety of his collections. On the other hand, the first intellectual need of the civilized man is to be moved through ideas, to take up into himself as much of the varied, wonderful life of the outer world as he can, and enlarge his personal experience with the experience of the race. She showed us that to him beauty

is something more subtle, more indefinable, than it is to the savage, and that, with regard to the human face, there lies in it the reflection of intelligence, the suggestion of power, or of sympathy and tenderness, and that no ornament can give this beauty.

"Every face is beautiful to me," she said, "in which I see a tender, loving heart looking out of it, and no face otherwise is so." She held up her finely formed hand to show us that she never wore a ring, and she told us of More's Utopians who used gold and silver to make chains and fetters for their slaves, and how they wondered that any man can be so mad as to count himself the nobler for the smaller or finer thread of wool which he wears, since the wool, no matter how finely spun, was worn by a sheep; and for all the sheep's wearing of it, yet could he be no other thing than a sheep! And in this way she taught us to wish not so much to possess, as to be in ourselves something valuable. Many years later she wrote to me:

"One of the blessings of my life when I entered youth and mature years was the meeting of finely cultured men and women; but, of course, I met the uncultured also, and so I have always seen at once the difference between them, and this has been a great blessing to me, for it has kept me from ever feeling that finery or rich clothes would add to my



value. I saw that, as a rule, it was the unlettered who thought most of fine clothes. That is why, I suppose, I go to the extreme, and cannot bear to see a cultured man with an ornament about his person, or even a flower in his button-hole. And as for a showy handkerchief cropping over an outside pocket, isn't it disgusting? I don't even like to see a ring on his finger.

"Elizabeth Stuart Phelps sent Whittier *What to Wear*. He wrote her that it was the voice which he long wished to hear. He spoke of the shoddy extravagance that had reached everybody, the church and the world alike affected. 'It has entered cradle and nursery and turned the sweet simplicity and grace of childhood into a fashionable scarecrow. Think of these grotesque caricatures of womanhood at the ballot box! . . . Scant of clothing where it is most needed, and loaded down where it is not.'

"In a book written by one of Queen Victoria's household during the life of the queen, so she probably read it, it was said that the queen wished her ladies to dress well but plainly, having a dislike to smart frocks, flyaway hats, and disorderly hair. I, too, have the same dislike for these things, and in children, especially, I like to see simple dressing. As for teachers, they should spend their money on books, not clothes. No pupil should go home from

school and feel ashamed of her mother's simple dress because there was too great a contrast between it and her teacher's. Do you remember that at C——, I wore to school a cape bonnet as most of the girl pupils did? And it did not hurt me as a teacher, for I had the power of sympathy. I remember a little boy used to run to meet me and take my hand as I went to school. He was not considered very bright. His teacher said to me, 'How can you have that boy take your hand in walking?' I said, 'I love to have him do so,' and so I did. I could not understand her feeling. I suppose that natural sympathy made discipline easy for me as a teacher. I could never speak ill of a pupil."

It was this natural sympathy, too, that gave her a remarkable degree of insight into the child-mind; and, by the way, there is no possible way of acquiring this insight without sympathy. No amount of what is called child-study, or psychology of the child-mind, or pedagogical training can be a substitute for this quick intuition, or unerring feeling. Everything else is but the gathering of bricks and stones. Sympathy is the master builder that puts them into place and makes an edifice of them in which children are really housed. It is one thing to count the number of stamens and petals in a flower; it is quite another thing to feel its beauty as a whole and repro-

duce it on canvas or in verse. Too many psychologists are but petal counters and classifiers by stamens and pistils; and that is why the most learned psychologists are apt to have the least knowledge of human nature. They forget that cataloguing intellectual activities by no means implies an unerring comprehension of their action as a whole, and young teachers ought especially to be warned against believing that even the most thorough and systematic study of the child-mind from books can give them any valuable knowledge of the child's character which sympathetic association with children cannot give. But even then, association with children can give nothing if the memory of our own childhood has faded from the mind and there does not still live in us some inextinguishable spark of youthful fire that kindles in the presence of youth, and wraps them and us in its clear, warm flame. It is an unreasoning, spontaneous emotion, refusing to be caught and fixed by rules, and therefore forever unteachable.

I have already said, and repeat it here, that it was this exquisite intuition of a deep love for children which gave our valiant teacher her remarkable knowledge of the child-mind. She did not seek the fruit in the flower. She knew that it is impossible to speak intelligently to a child outside of its ex-



perience, and did not need to go to Herbart to learn the "laws of apperception." She knew that a child's world is a very narrow one, and that it is a picture world, instead of a thought world, and that it is to be broadened, at first, by supplying it with more pictures, and letting the thoughts take care of themselves; and where are better pictures to be found than in the masterpieces of the world's literature? I remember with gratitude that in pursuit of this end, she laid aside our worn *McGuffey's Reader* with its scrappy, kaleidoscopic contents, broken bits from many pictures, and set us down before a complete panorama in that fine old classic, *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

She did not trouble us at all with the allegory. She knew that we were too young to understand its application to all the faults and vices of mankind, but we waded with her through the Slough of Despond; we saw the fire flash from the impending mountain; we heard the lions roar by the wayside; we fought with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation, tarried at Vanity Fair, groaned with Christian and Faithful in the Castle of Giant Despair, and finally climbed the Delectable Mountain and saw shining from afar the Celestial City. The book became a living reality to us, and that without drawing any didactic lessons from its reading. It was a

series of vivid pictures which only in later years acquired their complete didactic value.

When I try to recall the trend of this remarkable woman's teaching, I find that it lay in the idea of a simple, strong foundation for self-development; in other words, she meant to give us the wish to know and the power to gratify that wish by our own efforts. She never weakened us by injudicious aid. She stimulated us in every way to be our own teachers. She would have felt it a crime against us, to twist and mold us to some set pattern, cram us with a multitude of unrelated facts and thus exhaust our curiosity. Like the gardener who does not try to open the rosebud with his fingers, but lets the dew, the sun, and the rain do their work and give him the perfect flower, so she wisely refrained from hastening the natural development of the mind, lest she should deform it. She labored only to make herself unnecessary, and the day on which she could say to a child: "You need me no longer; your education, by virtue of your love of knowledge, is in your own hands now,"—that day she felt that her task was done.

The foundation for self-development, as she interpreted it, lay chiefly in an observant love of nature and a deep love of literature. To awaken in the child a *lasting love* for this wonderful external world



of which he is a part and set him to observing it with loving curiosity, to arouse in him a deep affection for his fellow-men as he sees them revealed in their thoughts and deeds in the finest literature, is to open to him the doors of a university in which he is master and pupil at the same time.

Her manner of doing this was entirely in harmony with her knowledge of children. She did not bait and tease the child with too many questions; she preferred that the questions should come from him. She never anticipated his experience, never required him to talk by hearsay; but wherever she could, she put experience in his way, led him through it, and then often refrained from talking of it, wishing him to preserve inviolate the freshness of his impression. I particularly remember this fact in relation to what was the most delightful and without doubt the most valuable part of her teaching; namely, reading aloud to us from fine books. She had a clear, penetrating voice and read in an entirely natural way, without any attempt at over-dramatization. I recall especially, her reading of *Barbara Frietchie*, *Skipper Iresson's Ride*, *Snow-Bound*, Hawthorne's *Gentle Boy*, Andersen's *Ugly Duckling*, Dickens's *Christmas Stories*, and other poems and tales from reputable writers, along with tales from Greek and Roman mythology; and I remember the stillness of the

shabby room with its marred desks (our fathers believed more in teachers than in environment then), but in no case do I remember her interrupting her reading to explain a passage beyond our reach. The vivid impression, the poetical effect, were far more to her than the precise interpretation of a metaphor, and I have a singular pleasure in recalling a childish error in my construing of the lines from Whittier's *Snow-Bound*:

"The low green tent  
Whose curtain never outward swings."

As the sweet lines rang out, there flashed through my childish mind, as yet unfamiliar with thoughts of death, one of those vivid mental pictures which startle us sometimes by their distinctness. I saw the grassy slope of a hill, flower-dotted, and felt the soft breeze that rippled the long grass stalks and waved gently to and fro the canvas of a tent. Years afterwards, on reading the poem, I was astonished to find that the lines meant a low, green mound in a graveyard; but at the risk of being misunderstood by some who love truth no better than I, I most emphatically declare that to the child that I was, the error in the beauty and sweetness of the picture it evoked was far more valuable to me than the truth would have been, for the simple reason that it struck the imagination and awakened it. Had my teacher stopped to

explain that the low green tent was a grave, I should have been deprived of a beautiful mental picture, and not having been vitally enlightened, I should have forgotten all about it in an hour or two; for, fortunately, we remember long only that which excites in us great pleasure or great pain.

In the same way as in literature, she tried to inspire us with a love of nature, not in a curious, analytic spirit, nor in the spirit of collective acquisition. It was a love into which beauty and imagination had breathed the spirit of poetry. Her own love of nature was something very rare and very peculiar. I can describe it in no better way than by calling it a real nostalgia. Her love for the woods and the fields was a passion. She went to them as the tired traveler goes home, and found rest and strength there. From these exhilarating walks in the woods, which we were sometimes allowed to share, she brought us the wild flowers, described their haunts, and dwelt on their beauty with such unfeigned delight, that we, too, learned to love them and to seek them for ourselves.

"It is wrong," she wrote to me once, "that children cannot all have some study of nature, love the simple wild flowers growing in woods and fields, get some knowledge of lower animal life, know the name



of every tree that they see about them, trace out some, at least, of the constellations in the sky, and know the story of the gods and goddesses that were given a place there. Then they would grow up more simple, less self-conscious, and careless for showy clothes and foolish amusements."

This wrong she did all in her power to right for us, and she taught us that education is not a *possession* of knowledge, but a *transformation* by means of it; that a man is not necessarily educated, because he can solve a difficult problem in mathematics, or knows his Latin grammar, or can answer any number of curious and difficult questions; that he may know all sorts of things and yet not know the deepest meanings and highest uses of life, nor his right place in the world, and that the value of what we know is to be tested by these simple questions: Are you happier or more useful for knowing this? Do you have truer views of man's relation to man by virtue of it? Are you broader-minded, more generous, kindlier, humbler, less mindful of the things that pass away and more mindful of those that endure? If you are, then you are truly educated, and the best educated man is he who is fittest to live, who has the most sources of pure enjoyment, who knows that the only real wealth is the trained eye, the hearing ear, the loving heart, the thinking brain, and who has such

mastery over his powers that wherever he falls, he falls on his feet.

She taught us, too, that in what nearest concerns a man, no one can really help him. All real help comes from within, not without. The world can make a man neither great nor little. It can create a favorable or unfavorable opinion of him, but it cannot put a thought into his head, or a noble impulse into his heart; and that just as the oak tree of the wood cannot say to the oak tree of the lawn, "Grow for me," so a man cannot say to any college or university or assemblage of men, "Give me an education: grow for me." The growth of the oak is the power of the individual tree. It comes from absorbing the sunshine and the rain, from striking its roots deeper into the ground; and in the same way, a man's soul growth is in his own power, and comes from absorbing the life around him wherever he may be; and she gave us the beautiful encouraging thought that though our ambitions might point to Harvard or Yale, to Paris or London, what we could not learn in our little obscure river town we could not learn elsewhere; that the principles of mathematics do not vary with the locality in which they are taught; that we could read history, poetry, and fiction as well at home as in the Bodleian Library; that the same stars shine for us that shone for Kepler and New-

## CHAPTER II

### THE ENGLISH QUESTION

A MAN'S language is his real letter of introduction to us, for it is the measure of his intelligence and his culture. His dress may be faultless, his manners perfect; but if his speech is halting and ungrammatical, we know his limitations. It is true that rare elevation and breadth of thought may give dignity to a faulty expression, just as a fine physique may make us forget a ragged or slovenly dress; but unquestionably the thought, like the physique, appears to better advantage when properly clothed; and the power to express thought with clearness, correctness, and force is one of the most desirable fruits of education. That is why grammar, rhetoric, composition, and literature have so prominent a place in the school curriculum. It is supposed that an analytic study of language in connection with an analytic study of literature, by formulating the rules for correctness and elegance of speech will necessarily lead to such correctness and elegance in practice. Unfortunately, it does not do anything of the kind. Never, perhaps, in the



history of education has so much time, labor, and money been expended on any branch of instruction as is now expended on the teaching of the mother tongue. In our country, it is the one subject which no pupil escapes in any year of his high school course; and yet there was never so general a complaint of inefficiency as that which is now raised against this department. The generality of the complaint makes it worthy of attention. Let us hear what it is. The charge is that graduates leave the high school unable to spell correctly or to read fluently; that they express themselves wretchedly, and do not love literature. If the charge is true, the English department of our instruction, with the best intention in the world, and let us add, with the most strenuous effort has failed to do that for which it exists. This does not mean that the teachers are incompetent; on the contrary, they are often the ablest men and women we have in our schools, and the hardest workers. If, therefore, neither the teacher nor the seriousness of the work can be reproached, would it not be reasonable to seek for the cause in the relation of the course to the pupils themselves?

It is said that Catherine II of Russia, after talking to Diderot's brilliant but impractical views of government, said to him:

"Monsieur Diderot, I have heard with

new habit which to the pupil seems artificial. Out of one hundred pupils in one of our western high schools, over sixty were accustomed to using "snuck" as the past tense and past participle of "sneak," and when told to use "sneaked," demurred on the plea that it sounded "funny" and they would be laughed at if they said it.

When we attempt to break up these habits by grammar and rules, we are not to be surprised at results like the following genuine quotation: "You shouldn't say ain't, because there ain't no such word as ain't." The habit is simply immensely stronger than the rule, and it continues to be stronger, because the rule is not a living part of the boy's daily speech, as is his vocabulary. In short, the study of grammar does not result in giving him an acute sense of his own imperfections, nor any proper mastery of language. From the rules of a language he has not yet learned to speak accurately, he passes to the study of rhetoric, that is to say, to the study of the rules of taste and literary criticism, the rules of elegance and finish in composition, before he has any adequate knowledge of the literature of his language from which these rules are drawn. In homely speech, we call this putting the cart before the horse. Undoubtedly the analytic study of grammar and rhetoric should *follow* and *not precede* a study of literature:

As it is, we reverse in English the pedagogical dogmas we defend elsewhere and commence a study of the abstract before any adequate notion of the concrete has entered the mind. It is like attempting to judge of bread before you have tasted it or even seen it; and it is not at all surprising that very vague and incorrect notions, if any at all, remain in the mind of the majority of pupils after a course of grammar and rhetoric.

The systematic study of literature follows in the curriculum the study of rhetoric; and here, again, the analytic method prevails, and every effort is made, exactly contrary to intention, to destroy the pupil's interest in his book, by requiring a minute attention to every detail of it, a minute analysis of every sentence, until its character as a whole is dissipated in a confused jumble of definitions, criticisms, paraphrases, quotations, notes, and collateral information. This sort of work goes by the promising name of "*intensive*," and it is simply a crime against the intellect of youth, for it deliberately kills the imagination, and with it the joy in imaginative literature. And then having killed the imagination, we weep at its funeral, and complain bitterly that the minds of our young people are wholly practical, entirely insensible to poetry, indifferent to everything but fact!

Let every book lover ask himself how he learned



to love books, and he will tell you that he did it by reading books for his pleasure, and never by dissecting them for his information or curiosity. Ask him how he learned to speak and write his language correctly, and he will answer, by hearing it spoken correctly and by reading good books — not by the study of grammar and rhetoric. When Macaulay was in India and was consulted upon the education of the Hindoos in the English language, he wrote:

“I must frankly own that I do not like the list of books. Grammars of rhetoric and grammars of logic are amongst the most useless furniture of a shelf. Give a boy *Robinson Crusoe*. That is worth all the grammars of rhetoric and logic in the world. We ought to procure such books as are likely to give to children a taste for the literature of the West, not books filled with idle distinctions and definitions which every man who has learned them makes haste to forget. Who ever reasoned the better for knowing the difference between a syllogism and an enthymeme? Who ever composed with greater spirit and elegance because he could define an oxymoron or an aposiopesis? I am not joking, but writing quite seriously when I say that I would much rather order a hundred copies of *Jack the Giant-Killer* than a hundred copies of any grammar or rhetoric or logic that was ever written.”

I have mentioned it as the great debt I owe the valiant woman who was the teacher of my childhood that she led me to books in this natural way, opening up their wonders to me and allowing them to speak for themselves without her constant interference. She did not put the great masterpieces into our hands as text-books, and parse us through Shakespeare and Milton, pelted with notes at every page, interrupting the flow of fancy at every line with the fatal question, "What does that mean?" or the foolish command, "Put that into your own words," thus requiring us to spoil a fine construction by a clumsy paraphrase. She introduced us to literature as she would have introduced us to music by playing exquisite melodies, instead of stopping the flow of the music to call our attention to the keys of the piano, the position of her hands, and further details of the technique of music, or to give us brief snatches of other melodies to contrast them with that which she had set out to play. No, she played through the air without let or hindrance, and we listened in delighted silence. There is no other way to enjoy music; there is no other way to love literature,—the music of the great souls of mankind. All thinkers know this, and many of them have said so. Dr. Johnson in his preface to Shakespeare says:

"Notes are often necessary, but they are neces-



sary evils. Let him that is yet unacquainted with the poems of Shakespeare and who desires to feel the highest pleasure that the drama can give read every play from the first to the last with the utter negligence of all his commentators. When his fancy is once on the wing, let it not stoop at correction or explanation. When his attention is strongly engaged, let it disdain alike to turn aside to the name of Theobald and of Pope. Let him read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and his interest in the fable. And when the pleasures of novelty have ceased, let him attempt exactness and read the commentators."

We do exactly the contrary: we begin with the commentators, and kill all interest and pleasure, striving for an exactness we never reach and miss the real object of reading.

Francesco de Sanctis, the foremost literary critic of Italy, and at one time professor of literature in the University of Naples, in the same spirit as Johnson would have his students of Dante throw away all their commentators and stick to the text, paying no attention whatever to any other sense than the literal one, saying:

"What you do not understand is not worth understanding: only that is beautiful which is clear. Cling

to your first impressions, which are best. Later you may explain them. Educate your taste. Questioning comes after the æsthetic impression is canceled; the mind cools, and the critic, no longer able to perceive the situation in its integrity, loses his way in the details."

He deplores the manner in which the schools deliberately destroy in the young all sense of the beautiful and the true, by never permitting the pupil to abandon himself to his immediate impression, but, on the contrary, forcing him to analyze and dismember all that he sees and hears, thus reducing everything to definitions and moral principles — a deplorably artificial method that first kills nature and then anatomically dissects the corpse.

Wherever a master hand is at the helm the ship steers out of this sickening, choppy, little sea into the wide waters. In Barrett Wendell's reminiscences of Lowell's teaching of Dante, he says:

"To that time, my experience of academic teaching had led me to a belief that the only way to study a classic text in any language was to scrutinize every syllable with a care undisturbed by consideration of any more of the context than was grammatically related to it. Any real reading I had done, I had to do without a teacher. Mr. Lowell never gave us less than a canto to read and often gave us two or three.

He never from the beginning bothered us with a particle of linguistic irrelevance. Here before us was a great poem, a lasting expression of what human life had meant to a human being dead and gone these five centuries. Let us try as best we might to see what life had meant to this man, let us see what relation his experiences, great and small, bore to ours, and now and then let us pause for a moment to notice how wonderfully beautiful his expression of his experience was. Let us read as sympathetically as we could make ourselves read, the words of one who was as much a man as we, only vastly greater in his knowledge of wisdom and beauty! That was the spirit of Mr. Lowell's teaching. It opened to some of us a new world. In a month, I could read Dante better than I ever learned to read Greek or Latin or German."

Mr. Wendell adds that Lowell was careless about the mechanical details of his work — the correction of papers and so forth. "Once after an examination, he said nothing about marks, and at last an anxious pupil asked what he had got. Lowell asked him what he thought his paper was worth. 'About sixty per cent,' was the answer. 'You may take it,' said Lowell, 'and I shan't have the bother of reading your book.'"

Those who mark with fractions and  $100 +$  and



100 — ought to read that over thoughtfully several times to feel the large indifference of a great mind to what seems so vastly important to the lesser one.

The fact is that the power to feel excellence is rare, but the ability to give a definition needs nothing but a grammar or a dictionary. A false purism in the schoolroom deliberately mutilates our fine, simple, idiomatic phrases by substituting for them a stilted pedantic speech born between the pages of a grammar and a dictionary and having no living reality in human intercourse. Fortunately, this purely artificial schoolroom English rarely becomes a fixed habit, but soon drops away from the pupil, leaving him his naturally slovenly speech which he might be able to outgrow if the love of the best literature had made a reader out of him; but a false method of studying classic literature results in an absolute indifference, if not distaste, for all good books, or else in a pedantic interest in mere form or curious information that is entirely opposed to a living, wholesome interest in literature. Then again, the books given to the pupils are often away beyond their mental horizon, and do them more harm than good. A dull lad in his senior year said to me recently, as he looked with disgust on an annotated copy of *Midsummer-Night's Dream*: "Why don't they give us something practical to read? It makes me mad every

time I take one of them dramas home!" and I thought as I listened to him that his teacher had set himself the task of cleaning an Augean stable with a garden hose, and hoped to transform it into a beautiful park with a handful of roses and violets.

But this unfortunate condition of literary instruction is by no means confined to our own country. It prevails more or less wherever literary instruction is given, and I cannot forbear giving a sketch of a delicious bit of irony on the subject to be found in a recent German book by Dr. Max Kemmerich, entitled *Dinge die man nicht sagt*. The author criticises university instruction in his country in the form of an account of the experiences of an enthusiastic young friend who goes to the university in the hope of drinking in learning as from an exhaustless well. At first, he is attracted to history, hoping to get a complete and connected picture of the development of human civilization, but instead of this he finds studies in endless and wearisome detail of fragments of history, and despairs of ever obtaining a broad view of the whole. Then he turns his attention to Oriental poetry. The subject fascinates his imagination, and he hopes to catch something of its spirit to insure himself a permanent source of intellectual pleasure. But here again he repeats the ex-



perience of his first attempt in history. His professor spends half a year lecturing on the various editions and commentaries of the *Arabian Nights*, before getting to his subject. By this time the fascination the student felt for Oriental poetry is changed to disgust, and he drops it for the study of German poetry. The course begins with a study of Walther von der Vogelweide.

"The person of the poet is the central point of observation, and naturally, it is not at first what he felt, nor what he suffered and struggled for, that engages our attention, but when and where he was born. That was an inexhaustible theme, as there are a considerable number of people by the name of Vogelweide, the birthplace of any one of whom might be that of our great poet."

After a long discussion of this question, occupying months, the professor solves the mighty question, and introduces his students to the poet's works.

"He chose the charming little song,

'Bei der Heide  
Da unser beide Bette was,  
Da könnt ihr finden,  
Wie wir beide  
Die Blumen brachen, und das Gras.  
Vor dem Wald in einem Thal,  
Tantaradei!  
Sang so süß die Nachtigall.'

"After an explanation of the grammatical word-form, etymology, etc., which consumed weeks, the explanation of the poem began. The discussion commenced, first, concerning the significance of the linden tree in the religion and customs of our forefathers; its geographical range, the form of its trunk and leaves, the conditions of its growth, and other highly important questions necessary to the comprehension of the poem.

"How subtle the poet's choice of the linden! No other tree could have harmonized with the design which Walther had in his mind, firstly, because there is a question of heath in the next stanza, and the linden stands in solitude, and not in dense forests. Secondly, because it gives a denser shade than other trees, and because its leaves are heart-shaped, and therefore a symbol of love; so that the poet through his choice of the tree already darkly hints at what is to follow; and lastly, because the linden is primevally German and sets the national heart to throbbing faster.

"As for the heath, it has its own peculiar flora and fauna. There are immense heaths in Germany. The best known is the Lüneberger heath; and yet is not probable that Walther was thinking precisely of this heath. However, it is not impossible. Professor Hinterbauer has indeed brought forward

some very weighty reasons for believing it, but as genuine savants, it is better to declare a *non liquet*."

Then followed a series of questions of fundamental significance which occupied a half year in discussion, and no solution of them was given at the end of it. True learning has such unfathomable depths! "The professor's further digressions concerning the reason why Walther did not lay the action of the poem *in* the forest, but (cf. b. 7) *before* the forest in a valley, we pass over, in order to turn to the explanation of the third line.

"*Da unser beide Bette was* ' is not to be literally understood, of course; because the transportation of a double bed into this somewhat remote region must certainly have been accompanied by difficulties. A single bed would have been decidedly easier to handle, but it would not have answered the purpose. The poet with his well-known thoroughness would not have omitted mentioning the fact that he had had a bed on the heath. Instead of that, he not only omits the declaration, but from what follows, it clearly appears that the bed in this case has a purely metaphorical significance. It stands for a place on which to recline, as a couch must designate a preparation for rest. For although, indeed, a mattress may be constructed of flowers and grass, a proper bed may not. At any rate, we shall seize this opportunity to



get a clear idea concerning the furnishings of a Roman house.

"We must not imagine that the furniture is so rich and costly as it is at present. In fact, the luxury of that age did not call into existence single objects of rare material and artistic value: on the contrary, domestic life, in comparison with our present ideas, was very primitive. To be sure, in the writers and poets of the middle ages, precious coverlets are frequently mentioned, and various names are given for such textures. For example, there is *Pfeller* (*pfellet*), old French *paile*, derived from *pallium*, *samit*, *Triblât*, *ciclât*, *Baldekin*, *Zendâl*, *Pôfûz*. (The bell rings.) 'Gentlemen, we shall continue in our next lesson the consideration of Roman textures and their terminology.'"

At first, the young student is not very much interested in this sort of thing, does not see any necessary connection between their wide excursions into history, etymology, antiquities, and the poem which he is studying; but under the daily pressure of custom and example, he finally becomes enthusiastic, and begins to feel that the only positive knowledge is philology; eventually becomes a philologist himself and has pupils of his own, whom he instructs exactly as he was taught. He has given up all original thinking and original work in order to write commentaries on the



works of other men who have been dust for centuries; and the author concludes his sarcasm by this remark:

"This perpetual rooting around in nullities, this puzzling one's brains over things that are utterly indifferent to everybody else, this raising of questions, not to advance learning, but in order to be able to publish a dissertation or a thesis,—all this which is so typical of the German savant has the fatal consequence of narrowing the horizon, dwarfing sound human reason, and encouraging intellectual arrogance."

Whatever we may think of the exaggeration of this picture, we cannot help admitting that it comes too near the truth to be dismissed with a laugh, and many an honest teacher's notebook will confirm the fact that encouraged by his profusely annotated text, he has strayed far away from his poem in a veritable wild-goose chase of research and finished with a scrap-bag of miscellaneous information instead of a definite conception of the poem as a whole.

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the object of the study of literature is not information, but inspiration, and that to make a classic the pretext for accumulating a vast number of facts in philosophy, geography, astronomy, history, natural science, philology, and antiquarian lumber, is to misuse it strangely, and hopelessly to destroy the purpose for which it was written. If it is a real classic,

it is an immortal bit of human life, and as such it speaks a language that all may understand; and though the young must necessarily lose what transcends their experience, they ought not to miss a certain breadth of outlook or that exhilarating atmosphere and intellectual stimulus which makes its characteristic value; and they would not, were their attention not distracted by endless impertinent digressions. What does it profit them to scan a verse and learn the etymology of its words, if they lose the tonic quality of its thought,—the quality that sets us on our feet again when we have been stumbling and are discouraged, that clears the blurred vision and makes us once more masters of ourselves? That is the glorious mission of genius, and youth should know how to listen to its message.

But criticism is easy: counsel and direction are far more difficult and incalculably more helpful. What ought *not* to be done is sufficiently clear. Now, what ought to be done?

I have spoken of the manner in which the remarkable teacher of my childhood interested her pupils in the reading of good books. Nothing could be simpler and nothing more effective. She made them the source of the deepest pleasures we had in school. She was one of those who believe that the earliest years of a child's life require the most careful teaching,

and that naturally this training is the mother's especial privilege, and the wasted hours of childhood were the lifelong burden of her thought.

"I feel deeply the present results in the education of the young," she writes, "but I am not sure that the schools are to blame in the matter. The children have not the right start from the very first in the home. The memory should be strengthened by learning fine poems, and long ones. The young should get a good vocabulary, beautiful thoughts, and a command of language from masterpieces in literature read to them. Instead of that, there is no home reading, or that of a very poor kind, and enough of such to weaken the mind; then, in school, follows the cramming of facts. I have sometimes been in the lower grades of the public schools, and I have pitied the poor children. I felt that if I were obliged to remain there a week, I should turn into one of the wooden benches. I suppose you know how little real mental culture the girls have who are given certificates to teach and begin their work with dear children.

"Beginning a teacher's life, I should not choose to be placed in a high school, where so many subjects must be taught superficially. President Hill said once that when connected with school boards he tried to have the best teachers put in the lowest



grades. George B. Emerson of Boston said that if he had three grades of schools and three teachers, he would put the best educated and most intellectual in the lowest grade and so on. What children learn young, they will long remember. I would not have a child learn a poem and then forget it, but obliged to have it ready to recite. I wrote a young boy to form the habit of reading a good poem every night before he went to bed. I agree with President Jordan on the inexpressible value of having children learn by heart fine poems. A child is wronged who does not know more than a hundred such by the age of fifteen. Professor David Swing once wrote me: 'You are right to have your pupils study good poems. I am more and more thankful that I once possessed the zeal to learn poems by heart. They are with me at all hours, and when friends are absent they become friends and pour into my ears their kind whispers.'

"Lucy Larcom said that when she was in the Lowell factory at twelve years of age, the poetry which she held in her memory breathed its enchanted atmosphere through her and around her, and even lighted up dull drudgery with its sunshine. Miss Sullivan said of Helen Keller, 'I am teaching Helen rhymes and verses. I think they quicken all the child's faculties, because they stimulate the imagina-



tion. Of course, I do not try to explain everything. Too much explanation directs the child's attention to words, so that he fails to get the thought as a whole.'

"Nothing, I think, takes the place of the early start in the supreme books. School studies of themselves gives no desire for knowledge. I have known high school and normal school graduates who had taken botany in their school course and yet never knew the names of the trees which they passed every day in the school yard, and what is more astonishing, they were quite indifferent about knowing them. So I see more and more that facts are poured into pupils' minds, but that they give no desire for knowing anything further. But reading of the best books from early days does so, by awakening thought, giving mental activity, and so results in intellectual culture. I have long thought that in a child's education there should not be much in a literary way before nine years of age, except being read to from classical literature, learning fine poems by heart, and learning to spell all the words in the same. I would not have a child begin reading books for himself too early, not, in fact, until his literary taste is really formed; otherwise poor books will often be read. Oh, the early reading is so valuable, and time is a sifter of books, and that is why the young should read only

the old, old books,—the classics. Of course they do not understand all that they hear, but what of that? Arnold of Rugby says truly of the young, ‘It is a great mistake to think that they should understand all that they learn, for God has ordered that in youth the memory should act vigorously, independent of the understanding, whereas a man cannot usually remember anything unless he understands it.’ How well it speaks of Arnold that as a rule his boys entered the higher schools with more character of the best kind than pupils of other schools.

“By the way, did you read what the Rhodes scholar, after a term’s residence at Oxford, said of the difference between the scholastic equipment of the Oxonian and his American colleague? It is extremely pertinent to the subject. Here it is:

“‘The Englishman is superior in general culture, is better read, and has more concentration than the American. A smattering of nearly every form of knowledge has been thumped into us, and like most smattering has oozed out through our cranial pores. Swamped by a great number of subjects in his precollegiate days, especially such as juvenile forms of astronomy and geology, the American boy is apt to become temporarily interested in one or the other of these studies and so devote his odd moments to out-of-school reading on his momentary

hobby, rather than to reading Scott, Dickens, or Thackeray. This is all very well, if he has a decided taste for one or two of these subjects which may develop with advancing years. Such is often the case, to be sure; but far oftener he loses his puerile interest in successive ephemeral favorites, forgets all but the last, and finally discovers his life work without having the knowledge of literature that attends so naturally a more confined field of study in which the literature of the ancients is the most prominent feature.

“‘To come to our closely allied frailties in the classics. . . . The smattering education we have received in our home schools is the origin. We have not really begun our classical work soon enough to be on a par with the Oxonian. The Englishman does not get a smattering of countless subjects throughout his precollegiate days. What he gets first, he keeps getting repeated doses of, and at the completion of his university course in *Litterae Humaniores*, he is saturated with literature, philosophy, history, and economics, ancient and modern. Within these bounds, he thoroughly dwarfs us classical Rhodians. Moreover, whether because we are an unrepresentative body of American collegiates, or because the human mind refuses to retain smatterings, we are often led to doubt the scholastic value of fleeting



taste does not exclude the possibility of interesting the children.

Any one who takes the pains to collect the advice of great thinkers as to what the young should read will be very much perplexed and amused by the conflicting opinions in the choice of books; yet all are agreed on one thing, and that is, that they should read the best books. Horace Mann thought little of history for children's reading and especially condemned the Old Testament as too horrible! While Dr. Arnold of Rugby particularly recommends history, and Ruskin attributes his power of application and skillful use of the English language to the habit of learning long chapters in the Bible and frequent reading of it forced upon him by his mother. Goethe speaks for the ancients, Macaulay for the modern writers. Emerson pleads for a little fiction as recreation. Dr. Arnold attributes the growing childishness in boys to the habit of reading exciting stories like *Pickwick* and *Nickleby* which satisfy their intellectual tastes without strengthening them, or arousing them to healthy activity. Dr. John Brown advises young medical students to shun modern and popular literature and go in for the older classic writers: Shakespeare, Dryden, Johnson, Molière, Spenser, Lamb. Walter Scott favors history, of



course, and would not plan any regular course of reading for children, but let their taste guide them, provided the taste be not vicious. Dr. Johnson is of the same opinion, only he goes a little farther in not discouraging a boy from reading anything at first; thinking it a great matter to get him to read at all. All, however, recommend poetry of any character. In short, each naturally favors the subject that has been most valuable to him. John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer prefer the scientists; Hazlitt is against them, and Lamb counts works of history, science, and philosophy among the books which are no books; and in one of his letters to Coleridge grows indignantly eloquent over children's books in which the primary object is to be instructive and not delightful. "Think what you would have been now," he cries, "if instead of being fed with tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history! Hang them! I mean the cursed Barbauld crew, those blights and blasts of all that is human in man and child!"

There is more than whimsicalness or individual taste in this little outburst. There really is in it a recognition of one of the deepest needs of the human intellect,—the need to escape from the oppressiveness of realities. Fact is very necessary; it is a practical world, but we play in it as well as

work in it. Imagination is the playground of the intellect. It is here we run, we leap, we climb, we set the blood in motion, and come back with heartier zest to our prosaic tasks. The preservation of this pure playground of the intellect is necessary to culture. The imagination is, in fact, the very source of all right enjoyment of literature, and to destroy it is to put out the eyes of the mind. For this reason, in the early reading of the young, we should make room for the world's great fables, fairy stories, myths and poems saturated with imagination. *The Arabian Nights*, *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *La Fontaine's Fables*, *The Fairy Tales* of Andersen and Grimm, Hawthorne's *Wonder Book* and *Tanglewood Tales*; the myths of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Norsemen will all find place there, and they should be read to children as they were written, and not in childish travesties of one-syllabled words, with all the thoughtfulness and quaint, vivid turns of expression wrung out of them, until they are poor, bare, colorless, ghastly skeletons of themselves. The language of a great writer is not the least valuable of his gifts to us, and it should never be sacrificed to give place to puerilities. Besides, how is a child's vocabulary to be increased if he is always to hear the few simple words with which it begins? Memorizing of fine poems

might accompany this reading. Conversations on what had been read and narrations of it are excellent language lessons, and should be as spontaneous as possible, no previous preparation being required. The real drill should fall on written and oral spelling. A great deal of foolish criticism of long lists of disconnected words given to spell, has almost driven the practice out of our schools; but those of the older generations who were drilled in their spelling books, can, at least, spell without any difficulty, and have some very pleasant recollections of exciting spelling matches which not only relieved the task of its drudgery, but gave it a real zest.

In the same way good oral drill in grammatical forms, constant correction of slovenly, muddled, and ungrammatical expressions, might take the place of a text-book until the pupil reaches the high school. Here the formal study of grammar might profitably begin, provided it attends strictly to its own business of being a careful study of the relation of words to each other, and is not one of those mongrel productions of so-called "correlation" which tries to be literature, history, geography, science, and grammar all in one. Not long ago, while searching for a grammar to put into the hands of a young Russian, anxious to learn the principles of the English tongue, I found to my great astonishment that the books which our



children were using for grammars were utterly useless for the purpose; and I had to search through numbers of second-hand book stores for some old-time grammar, and was fortunate enough to run across a copy of Lindley Murray. It gave me great pleasure to see again the subject treated with bare simplicity, unshrinking straightforwardness, absolutely indifferent as to whether the learner will find the bare white skeleton dull and ugly or not. One idea only seemed to occupy the author, and that was to make his articulations clear. And, after all, is it not the business of grammar to teach the anatomy of the language, to give names to its bones, to show how they fit into each other, and clothed with thought make the grace, beauty, and motion of language?

Acquaintance with the great masterpieces should continue, but now the pupil for the most part must do his own reading. In connection with every high school, there should be a small but very select library. It need not contain more than two or three thousand books including duplicates of the very best, and necessary dictionaries and books of reference. With very rare exceptions these books should not be used as texts nor provided with annotations. "A work of art," says Goethe, "is to be enjoyed, not analyzed." To dawdle weeks and months over a book which could be read



in a few days, teased and tormented by questions and definitions and notes, until all real interest is destroyed and weariness and disgust take their place, is, I repeat, an educational crime. We wish to make these boys and girls wide readers; we wish them to find the joy and consolation of friends in the world's best books, and they must do it as we did it, by being turned loose in a library and allowed to pick and choose a book with no set plan, no definite system. We read because we had an appetite for reading, because curiosity and interest grew by what it fed on. Would it not be a good plan to allow pupils the same liberty, giving them each day an hour, or better, two, in the library with the privilege of making their own selections, but requiring them to give a written or oral report of what had been read every fortnight?

This report made in the class room on a variety of books would have the effect of stimulating curiosity and would direct the reading into channels naturally interesting to the young. In this way, during a school year of forty weeks, at least twenty good books would have been thoroughly read, and, what is more, enjoyed by each pupil, where under the present method only four or five are read and that, for the most part, in a wholly unprofitable way.

In the second year a systematic study of English

literature might be entered upon, and the reading of the pupils with regard to class-room work might be directed towards an acquaintance with the works of the author under discussion. An introductory lecture by the teacher on the purpose and meaning of literature in general, its commencement in poetry, and the reason for it, the growth of the drama out of religious sentiment, the reading of Lowell's essays on Chaucer and Spenser, are all that is necessary before opening the course with the study of Shakespeare.

Young people in general are not sufficiently impersonal in their tastes to be able to get anything of particular value from the study of Chaucer, and few teachers are able to read old English with anything that approaches accuracy. But then, is anybody quite sure how it was spoken? The time available for linguistic study is too short for any valuable achievement, so that it is altogether better to let our earliest poet continue to be the delight of poets, instead of turning him into a stumbling block for the young. With Shakespeare, however, the student sails at once out on the boundless waters, with a vast horizon and an open sky. The school editions of the best-known masterpieces may be profitably put into his hands, but the teacher should dwell as little as possible on the notes and as much as possible upon

the revelation of the immense breadth of mind displayed in the dramas, in which all human nature, its littleness as well as its greatness, is so vividly and faithfully reflected. The pupil should be made to feel that the spirit of poetry does not lie in its form, but in its sentiment, that it is thought heated by feeling and expressing itself musically. Many striking passages, rich in thought or in beauty of sentiment, should be memorized; but the work should never be allowed to drag. Better an entire ignorance of the really great geniuses, than such a knowledge of them as wearies and repels.

From the study of Shakespeare, it might be just as well to go on with the study of the remaining great poets. Studying authors in groups according to the character of their work is just as legitimate as studying them in chronological order.

The great essayists, Johnson, Addison, Steele, Swift, De Quincey, Lamb, Macaulay, Arnold, Emerson, Thoreau, might follow the poets; and last of all, the novelists might be taken up. Here let the pupil be made to feel clearly what it is that makes the real excellence of a novel which the world will not willingly let die. It is because it speaks to man through man; not through his clothes or his environment, or the mere external adventures of his life, but through character, feeling, and thought. And let the greatest



care be taken to preserve to youth its generous enthusiasms and harmless illusions. They are its birth-right and belong to it as the down on the peach, the bloom on the plum, and the dust on a butterfly's wing; and it is entirely unnecessary to smutch the hero with dwelling on the sordid details of his life.

I grant that there is much that is absurd in the artificially heroic attitude towards life of the older fiction, there was much strutting about on stilts, where we now walk much more comfortably on our natural feet; but of late we have been rushing to another extreme. We are infected with the horror of the commonplace, and because everybody can walk on his feet, we think it a distinction to saw off our legs and reel about on a miserable stump. And so a vast amount of merely clever writing has come into vogue of late which is very easy reading, very amusing reading, but somehow it has no staying quality. Once read, we feel no inclination ever to read it again. It leaves no exhilaration behind it—stirs no deeper self in us than what lies at the surface. It is to the rich, full literature of the past, what the pert, noisy, egotistic stripling whom we call a *smart Aleck* is to the mature, thoughtful man, full of quips and sallies when the humor seizes him, but also capable of large and serious thought that lifts us out of our lower selves.



This smart Alecky literature ever on the alert to utter brilliant paradoxes, preferring to stand on its head, walk on its hands, and kick its heels together, if it can only attract attention, has succeeded the wave of pessimistic and subjective writing which followed the great scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century. The pessimistic literature was the cry of despair that followed the loss of faith; and terrible as it often was, it had at least the ring of genuine feeling in it, and was infinitely more respectable than this mocking, imp-like bravado, proud of its heartlessness, with its thumb at its nose and a twirl of its fingers at all the sweet and ennobling illusions of the human heart! It mocks at religion, it laughs at love, it spits at marriage, it grins with a fiendish delight at the crash of a fallen idol — and would smash Michelangelo's Moses to put Billikins in its place, and hide the canvas of the Madonna of the Chair with a flaring poster of a Hawaiian girl in the hula-hula dance!

But this sort of thing cannot last. We shall outgrow our spiritual growing pains, mental anæmia, and hysterical convulsions and return once more to the broad, serene, contemplative attitude towards life. The generous superabundance of the sap of life which bubbles up in the older writers will course through our veins again and relieve the tension of the over-

wrought nerves that ask now for a galvanic battery to move them, instead of the rose of the garden and the lily of the field. We shall cease to fear the commonplace, when we have imagination enough to transmute it. A fly darts into a sunbeam and is transfigured. It is no longer a dull, dark, colorless insect. It gleams like gold,—a radiant, moving point: so a dull fact gleams in the presence of a mind all light and warmth. It is the same fact, but it has color and movement now. It dazzles and fascinates. And we shall have our facts given to us again alive and shining in the golden light of genius, when we cease to wish the impossible, and feel again a healthy joy in life.

This irradiating, transmuting power of genius is what the pupil must be made to recognize and feel, before his schoolroom course in literature is finished. Then, and not till then, is he able to begin the study of rhetoric with any degree of profit. He knows, now, some of the characteristics of a great book. He knows the spell of fitting and musical language, and he may learn to give a technical name to some of the forcible ways of expressing a thought. He has learned what some great men think on various subjects, and they have stimulated him to think for himself, and enabled him to write a readable essay. The folly of requiring young people to write before

they have anything to say, and to express an opinion before they have one or are able to have one, is committed repeatedly every day. We talk a great deal about our indebtedness to Pestalozzi, but I hear no one calling attention to what he says on this very point, namely:

“In order to direct children to the path of reason and of independent thinking, we must take care as much as possible that they do not open their mouths and accustom themselves to utter an opinion about things which they know only superficially. The time for learning is not the time for judging. Judging belongs to the time of mature perception of the causes which underlie the subject to be judged. I believe that every judgment having inner truth, which an individual pronounces, ought to fall from a comprehensive knowledge of causes as ripe and complete as the perfect, ripened grain freely and without constraint falls from the husk.”

Do we heed Pestalozzi's advice? On the contrary, we pull open the tender green husk, take out the swelling grain full of milky juice, squeeze it between our fingers and destroy forever its power of growth; for if we find a timid, growing soul that says with beautiful frankness, “I do not know,” we force it out of its sheltering ignorance, and make it write an essay about something away beyond its experience and pre-



tend to know what it does not know. We fly far above our pupils' heads, and force them to seem, at least, to take these aërial flights with us, instead of flying alone when we *must* fly, and saying:

"Never mind. I don't expect you to understand that yet. I should be disappointed if you did. I only wished to show you that there is another way of getting over the space, and that yours is not the only one. Don't be too sure of anything yet. Remember that growth is change, and that if you knew everything now, there would be no advantage in growing older. Don't espouse an opinion before you can take care of it, and don't let your mind get hide-bound."

And what are we to do when school boards put Emerson into the curriculum, and Ruskin's beautiful, chivalric thought clothed in its exquisite, poetical garb? Well, there is one thing we are *not* to do; we are not to allow the pupils to say that Emerson is "crazy," and Ruskin a "fool"; and when we come to the essay on the *Over Soul*, it is better to pass it quietly by. Do we know so much about the *Over Soul* ourselves? And we are to teach respect for what is above us. How infinitely superior to the student's insolence in the presence of what he does not understand is that instinct of reverence which spoke through a rough-looking English workman who



stopped Tennyson in Covent Garden one day, saying as he held out his hand:

“You’re Mr. Tennyson. Look here, sir. Here am I. I’ve been drunk for six days out of the week, but if you’ll shake me by the hand, I’m damned if I ever get drunk again.”

If we can bring our boys and girls to anything like the uplifting admiration of this rough laborer, we shall not be teaching literature in vain.

The task of essay writing is perhaps the most difficult, most tiresome, and most unwillingly performed of all the tasks assigned in English work, and is certainly the most wearing on the teacher. The object of essay work is to engender ideas and teach the proper forms of expressing them. We talk a great deal, in a vague sort of way, about teaching children to think, as if it could be done by some mysterious inner elaboration without furnishing the materials of thought; but it is impossible to give out anything before taking anything in. A meager vocabulary, and vagueness regarding the meaning of words, even in common use, are the first difficulties to be overcome; and if subjects for essays are assigned wholly within the child’s experience, he is confined to his narrow, insipid vocabulary and his very narrow, insipid experience, and writes nothing worth reading. If a subject is assigned which requires him to consult

books, he copies diligently turns of phrases in a mechanical way that leaves no impression with him, because it has cost him no effort. Therefore, since we cannot reasonably expect originality of thought or valuable ideas from the young, we should think of supplying them with a vocabulary. The best method for laying the foundations of a rich and flexible language and furnishing material for thought is to begin by reading to the class a short selection of perfect English, embodying a distinct idea, usually ethical, and requiring a report of it to be written in the presence of the teacher. Franklin's anecdote of the handsome and deformed leg, Lord Chesterfield's letters, Addison's essays, La Fontaine's fables, may be mentioned as admirably suited to this work, and not the least valuable discipline of it comes from the power of attention enforced.

The work may be varied by selecting a subject for general discussion, at the close of which the class may be required to write an essay upon it, or to report the main points throughout. The manner of conducting this general conversation is very important, and the teacher himself, before entering upon it, should know exactly what he intends to make prominent. If he does not know this, the discussion becomes mere futile floundering. The power to concentrate the thought on one aim only, and drive

every question home on the straightest line to that aim, is a rare one. Most questioners are apt to take tortuous, even circuitous paths to it, and sometimes to miss it entirely.

After the first draught of the essays has been made in class, they should be exchanged among the pupils next day, for mutual correction, remembering that "the teaching is to the teacher and comes back most to him." When the pupils have marked all the errors that they can find, the essays should be returned to the owners, who make a clean, corrected copy for the teacher.

The teacher's task may be lightened considerably by simply writing on the blackboard the most glaring errors that he finds, together with a properly spelled list of the misspelled words he has noticed. By calling the attention of the whole class to the errors that have been overlooked, he increases the pupils' watchfulness, and impresses the correction more forcibly because it is made public. There is no necessity of returning the essay, or of taking the time to mark the papers. The strength and vigor that go to this work may be more profitably saved to the teacher to be expended in other ways. There is no more cruel waste of vitality in teaching than that of minute marking of papers to be returned; and no teacher is justified in dulling his mind and wasting the rich hours of his

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leisure in poring intently over the crude productions of immaturity, when he might be more truly fitting himself for his work by drawing inspiration from the masters.



## CHAPTER III

### INSTRUCTION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, ANCIENT AND MODERN

IN Hamerton's admirable book, *The Intellectual Life*, there is an excellent letter addressed *To a Student of Modern Languages*, which every modern language teacher should read when he is discouraged over the progress of his pupils, or disheartened by the acrid criticisms of modern language teaching which at present are heard on every side. In that chapter, Hamerton lays down the following five principles which he believes are unassailable and "based on much observation of a kind wholly unprejudiced and tested by a not inconsiderable experience":

"1. *Whenever a foreign language is perfectly acquired, there are peculiar family conditions. The person has either married a person of the other nation, or is of mixed blood.*

"2. *When a foreign language has been acquired (there are instances of this) in quite absolute perfection, there is always some loss in the native tongue. Either the native tongue is not spoken correctly, or it is not spoken with perfect ease.*

"3. *A man sometimes speaks two languages correctly, his father's and his mother's, or his own and his wife's, but never three.*

"4. *Children can speak several languages exactly like natives, but in succession, never simultaneously. They forget the first in acquiring the second, and so on.*

"5. *A language cannot be learned by an adult without five years' residence in the country where it is spoken, and without habits of close observation, a residence of twenty years is insufficient."*

"This is not encouraging," he continues, "but it is the truth. Happily a knowledge which falls far short of mastery may be of much practical use in the common affairs of life, and may even afford some initiation into foreign literatures. I do not argue that because perfection is denied to us by the circumstances of our lives, or the necessities of our organization, we are therefore to abandon the study of every language but the mother tongue. It may be of use to us to know several languages imperfectly, if only we confess the hopelessness of absolute attainment. That which is truly and deeply and seriously an injury to our intellectual life, is the foolishness of the too common vanity which first deludes itself with childish expectations and then tortures itself with

late regret for failure which might have been easily foreseen."

This is a particularly pertinent reminder just now, when language teachers all over the world are either asking themselves in despair what they should or should not do, or are boasting the wonderful results to be expected from the so-called natural method.

I do not think that it is a lack of courage to look the question squarely in the face so much as an inextinguishable pedagogical optimism that leads us into so many errors with respect to the outcome of language teaching. A little child, unaided, untaught, learns to speak its mother tongue intelligibly by the time it is four years old, and it would seem reasonable to suppose that a youth with the advantage of a trained mind might as easily acquire a foreign language, so that he would be able to speak it with at least a tolerable degree of fluency and accuracy after four years' study in a high school. But the fact squarely contradicts the supposition. The youth does not acquire the necessary command of the spoken tongue, although he may have a very serviceable knowledge of the written language and a valuable introduction to its literature. That is, he has the imperfect knowledge of which Hamerton speaks, and which is by no means to be despised, if the youth



in question has an assimilative and curious mind capable of continuing its acquisitions.

But with our immoderate optimism we are not satisfied with that. "What! You have studied German four years, and you can't carry on an intelligent conversation with a native without having recourse to your mother tongue? It is absurd!"

No, it is not absurd! It is the most natural thing in the world and that is why it happens so. Let us consider what the youth has done under the most favorable circumstances offered to him. We will not suppose, however, that he has enjoyed the advantage of German, French, or Spanish parentage and has heard at home from his infancy the language which he is to study at school. We will suppose that he has never heard it spoken until he begins the study of it, which is most frequently the case in the majority of our high schools. We will give him a native teacher and the much and justly extolled natural method, for, as Hamerton says, "By far the shortest way to learn to read a language is to begin by speaking it. The colloquial tongue is the basis of the literary tongue." Therefore, he shall hear in the class room only the language he is to learn, and he shall hear it every school day in the week. He shall have, too, the longest recitation period available, which is ordinarily forty-five min-



utes long. This means that for forty-five minutes during five days in the week, he has heard a little German, French, or Spanish, as the case may be, and that, after each of these periods, he has passed directly into an English recitation, and for the rest of the day has heard nothing but English. The natural result is that it will be weeks before the strange sounds have become sufficiently familiar to be retained properly in the memory, and months before they can be reproduced with anything like accuracy. If the youth is not provided with a book, it will require a still longer time to retain even the meager vocabulary with which his instruction must necessarily begin. We have no better name for this method than the "natural method," forgetting that the really natural method is the banishment of every other language at all times, except the language to be learned. The infant whom nature instructs hears the new language everywhere, at home, in the street, in places of amusement and places of instruction. It comes to him in play and in earnest; it is the medium through which his wishes are made known and his needs are gratified. He cannot help learning it if he would; while, on the contrary, the youth in his recitation of forty-five minutes has it presented to him in a manner wholly foreign to any of his wishes or necessities, and if for a moment his atten-

tion is distracted, the spoken word is lost and the relation of ideas is hopelessly muddled.

Therefore, instead of wondering that he retains so little, we should rather wonder that he retains as much as he does, and we should not set up an impossible standard of perfection, and condemn all language teaching because the results fall far below it. We should rather frankly lower the standard to the possible, know just what we really can do, and then try to do it in the best possible way. To the English-speaking student, all foreign languages are complicated with grammatical inflections entirely wanting in his mother tongue, and his first clear ideas of grammatical relations, even in his own tongue, come to him through the study of a foreign language. German is especially a highly inflected language, almost as difficult as Latin. "If I die," wrote Lowell from Germany, "I shall have engraved on my tombstone that I died of *der, die, das*, not because I caught 'em, but because I couldn't." Many a schoolboy has felt likewise, and nothing but a patient study and a patient drill in grammatical forms can clear up the puzzle, and give him mastery of them.

On the contrary, the German student has not the same difficulty in studying English. He finds a language almost without inflections. Gender is based upon sex, adjectives do not agree with their nouns in

gender, number, or case. Nouns have no case inflection except the possessive, which offers no difficulties. The verbs are extremely easy, and though spelling may offer distracting irregularities, he is not troubled with that in commencing by the so-called natural method. But the English youth is perplexed at once with *der*, *die*, *das* and the unaccountable genders of inanimate things, and the best way to start him is to explain to him in his own tongue a few of the grammatical peculiarities of the language, before beginning to talk to him in it. And here it is important to state that the study of foreign languages may be viewed from two entirely different standpoints, and that provision for studying them in two ways might very properly be made. It is undoubtedly true that the majority of high school pupils will not be likely to have sufficient practice in the spoken foreign language, after leaving school, to enable them to retain what they have learned, and it will gradually fade from the memory; for it seems to be a law of mental acquisition that we soon lose what we cease to make use of. In such cases, the chief value of language study would lie in a thorough mastery of grammatical principles and a sufficiently ample vocabulary to make reading in the foreign tongue a pleasure and not drudgery. Of course, this



implies in the pupil certain pronounced literary tastes that would induce him to continue his work alone in the language for the sake of becoming acquainted with what another race of men has thought and felt.

This is by no means an unworthy object; in fact, no object can really be more worthy, or more important from an educational or an intellectual point of view if it is attained. It is vastly more worth while to talk with Goethe and Schiller in their books than to gossip about trivialities with Tom, Dick, and Harry; and the teacher who has been successful enough to lay this thorough foundation for reading in any language need not blush for his work, even if it is the fashion nowadays to sneer at the drillers of irregular verbs. And if he feels the need of authority to support him in not banishing the mother tongue from the class room, he can find it in no less a master than the celebrated teacher of languages, Jacotot, and in the father of modern pedagogy, the great Comenius.

Jacotot declared that "every one can teach; and moreover can teach what he does not know himself," and proved it by his own experience as professor of French in the university of Louvain. He had many pupils whose only language was Flemish and Dutch,



of which he himself knew nothing; but he did not make that fact a pretext for banishing the mother tongue. He gave his pupils Fénelon's *Télémaque*, with French on one side and a Dutch translation on the other; and his method was the simple one of comparison and memorizing, throwing the pupil entirely upon his own efforts, except in the matter of pronunciation.

Comenius in his fourth principle of the facility in instruction and learning, after illustrating Nature's method of proceeding from the simple to the complex, in which man imitates her in his own efforts, says that this principle is exactly reversed in the schoolroom, when what is unknown is taught by something equally unknown, and that this happens —

“I. When Latin rules are communicated in Latin to beginners in that language.

“II. When a Latin-German dictionary is given to beginners, while it is the German-Latin that should be given instead. For they are not trying to learn German by the help of Latin, but Latin is to be learned by the help of German, which is already known.

“III. When a foreign master ignorant of his pupil's mother tongue is given to the latter. For if the common medium of communication is wanting to them, they can only fumble around with

signs and guesses, and what is that but a tower of Babel?

. . . . .

“These faults may be avoided:

“I. When teacher and pupil speak the same language.

“II. When all explanations of the unknown tongue are given in the known language.

“III. When the grammar and dictionary of the language to be learned are suitable for the purpose.

“IV. When the study of a new language proceeds step by step, so that the pupil is first accustomed to comprehend (for this is the easiest), then to write (by which, time is allowed for thinking), and last of all to speak (which, because it must be extempore, is the most difficult).”

Leaving now the consideration of the pupils who would more profitably study a language in order to gain a reading knowledge of it, we may turn our attention to those who wish the language for purely commercial purposes. Here the question is not one of speaking correctly, but of speaking in any way so that it is possible to be understood. The vocabulary is built up by naming the objects in sight, by the *aid* of pictures and of action. It is a wholly *admirable* method, and were it possible to extend it

over more of the pupil's time it would doubtless lead in the end to that accuracy which only a laborious drill can give. It does often reach very effective work, as it is; but I have yet to learn that, with the time at the teacher's disposal at present, it will stand a vigorous general test where rigorous accuracy is required. But if it reaches its object by giving the pupil a practical vocabulary for the ordinary uses of life, it is all we ought to require of it. Certainly there is no other way of reaching this result. To learn to speak, we must speak.

The fact that present results in language teaching reach neither object here proposed,—that is, thorough grammatical knowledge of the foreign tongue with ability to read the classics easily, or direct command of the spoken language with the power to acquire further knowledge through reading,—shows the necessity of some radical change in presenting the subject.

In the first place, whether the object be to read or to speak, the teacher at any rate (*Jacotot to the contrary*) must himself know how to read and speak, the river can rise no higher than its source,—it is only genius that has the precious gift of *sp* and lasting inspiration to self-activity. The very statement of this necessity sounds like irony, but it will only surprise the general public to



know how frequently the teacher is but little in advance of the pupils. If the former is conscientious and diligent and a real learner with the latter, pushing on his own knowledge as far ahead as he can, the result for both is by no means so indifferent as might be supposed. The two greatest teachers of modern times, Pestalozzi and Froebel, were both extremely ignorant so far as mere book learning goes, yet each was infinitely superior to the ordinary savant in the power of growing in knowledge and in imparting what he did know, and in awakening in his pupils the capacity for work. The well-known German geographer, Karl Ritter, said of Pestalozzi that he knew less geography than a child in the primary schools, yet that from listening to him, he gained his chief knowledge of geography and first conceived the idea of the natural method, and that it gave him great pleasure to attribute to Pestalozzi whatever of value there was in his work.

It is a similar self-activity which the language teacher must arouse before any effective work can be done. He himself must not be always the chief performer in the class room. He must oftener be simply the director of the pupils as performers. It is they who must make as much use as possible of the daily acquired knowledge and be stimulated to wish to increase it. It requires real power in a teacher to



do this, and that power is very rare, because it implies great flexibility, a certain dramatic instinct, a keen sense of humor, great resourcefulness, and the childlike gift of losing one's self entirely in the occupation of the moment. The great language teacher is artist and actor and composer in one.

But what can we do who are not artists and actors, but simply earnest men and women who wish to make our work effective and not a farce? We can decide to do one of two things,—teach language for the sake of its literature, or teach it for the purpose of readiness in ordinary conversation, and be quite willing to admit the limitations of each method, and the impossibility of combining the two with beginners.

Suppose that we decide upon the first course. We shall give the pupil a good grammatical foundation, teaching him not necessarily in a dry and lifeless manner, but through vivid practical examples, and through the texts he reads as well as through the grammar. He will write frequent exercises, not disconnected sentences only, but very simple themes which the teacher has taken the pains to discuss in the foreign language in order to give him a proper vocabulary and proper phrasing of it. The mother tongue will not be entirely banished from the class room. It will be used whenever it is necessary to give him clear ideas; nor will translation into the

mother tongue be banished. On the contrary, wherever a difficult passage occurs, a translation into good idiomatic English will be required. The fact that even the brightest pupils will sometimes gravely write the most absurd drivel, the most glaring contradictions, as genuine translations and seem entirely unconscious of the absurdity, until the teacher points it out, is sufficient evidence, not only of the importance, but of the absolute necessity, of such work, if we attach any value to a correct understanding of what is read. Pupils will be the first to laugh most heartily over their absurdities, and will learn that when they write nonsense, their translation is never correct, which recognition is by no means an unimportant matter.

Another very good exercise is to require the translated text to be retranslated into the foreign tongue, the pupil being required to make his own corrections by comparing his text with the original. He should be encouraged to ask why his faulty construction is not so good as the original, and should memorize idiomatic expressions. This careful attention to form is extremely valuable to the pupil. In fact, as often as possible all exercises should be corrected by the pupil himself from a written or printed model placed before him, and he should be required to compare his work with it word by word and letter by

letter. Afterwards, without the model, he should re-write the exercise until he can do it correctly. This takes time, but little by little the pupil is trained to *see* accurately, which is exactly what he is unable to do at first.

In this course, the texts selected for reading should be from the acknowledged classics. As the pupil advances, the recitation may be more and more fully conducted in the foreign language; but the teacher should never hesitate to require a good English translation, whenever a new idiomatic expression or a subtlety of thought presents a difficulty. The pupil should be encouraged to extend his reading of his own accord, for which purpose a necessary number of copies of masterpieces should be at his service. He should not be discouraged from getting help in any possible way, and if a good English translation of his foreign text can be procured, he should be allowed to use it for composition and help. In this way a great deal more ground may be covered, and at the end of a four years' course the pupil will be able to continue his work alone, and he will also have learned to express himself, if not with idiomatic volubility, at least with sufficient correctness to make himself understood.

Since Locke's defense of interlinear translations for the classics, there have not been wanting clever



men who recognize their utility ; but they have never yet been adopted in the class room, and a certain stigma has been attached to their use, as if it were a disgrace to learn easily and quickly, instead of by a slow, laborious process. Gustave Le Bon in his *Psychologie de l'éducation* recommends the use of translations, and says that he quickly acquired a reading knowledge of English by simply taking any English book — *The Vicar of Wakefield* — and reading it with the help of a French translation. However, he condemns an interlinear translation as a “detestable means of learning to read a language”—evidently because of the distorted and unnatural form in which the native language must necessarily appear, in order to be literally reproduced. He sent to England for translations of the works of Alexandre Dumas, which he had never read, and commenced by trying to read *Monte Cristo*. At the end of a month he was able to read the second volume in one night. Of course, this is the work of a trained mind of unusual power, but it is suggestive enough to show the immense advantage of such a method over the work at a snail's pace done in our high schools and colleges ; and it pleads, too, for the value of training to read.

This particular value has been noted by another eminent French author, Maurice Legendre, in his



*Problème de l'éducation.* He asserts that from an educational point of view, it is folly to wish to teach languages, as the child learns his mother tongue. "It is, in fact, impossible; the mother tongue was associated in us with the creation of all the ideas which fill the mind; it even contributed to form these ideas: other languages, on the contrary, are based on a system of ideas already formed and adapted to that system. . . . The so-called practical methods which are the rage to-day for the study of languages (which may be useful for commerce and travel), proceed with a rapidity which does honor to the faculties of man, or of the young man, set far above those of a child, but which ought to make us suspect that their resemblance to that of learning the mother tongue is quite external and illusory. We can even learn dead languages by these practical methods. It was the case with Montaigne. But the intellectual profit which we draw from the acquisition of a living or a dead language does not depend upon the manner in which we acquired it, but, as we shall see, by the familiarity which comes afterwards."

Let us consider now the second course of language study, where the object is the idiomatic volubility which makes social intercourse easy. Here, the mother tongue is completely banished from the class room. The text-book, too, does not appear for

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the first few months. The pupil begins by learning the names of all the objects which surround him; the parts of his body, the articles of clothing he wears, the food he eats, the furnishings of his home, the familiar objects which he sees on the streets, the trees and flowers of the garden and park, the household animals, the abstractions of color, taste, smell, action; in short, his little external world is to be reconstructed for him in other terms than those he is familiar with; and constant repetition is the keynote to his progress. That is why progress, at first, is necessarily slow, and the short time at the teacher's disposal offers a very serious obstacle to it. The new words are quickly forgotten, driven out of the mind by the rapid succession of other studies, other ideas, another tongue. I shall never forget the utter despair of a bright little French woman, not quite master of the English tongue, and never using it in the class room, who after a year's attempt in the public schools to instruct in this manner, without the use of a text-book, declared it to be utterly impossible.

However, the method is said to be used successfully in Germany; only a very much longer time is given to the study of foreign languages, and children even in their hours of recreation are required to speak them. In the City of Mexico I met young Mexicans

whose mother tongue was Spanish, but who spoke French fluently. On inquiry, I found that their textbooks in science and mathematics were in French and that they recited their physics and algebra in French. Thus, for the greater part of their school work, they were speaking a foreign tongue. It was as if they were really living in France, and the progress made in the language was astonishing. We are unable to imitate them in this respect, and therefore are fighting against immense odds, and must not condemn the method if we fail in it.

When a fair vocabulary has been acquired, a textbook is given to the pupil, and he is taught to read. Here, instead of choosing a classic and giving him a literary vocabulary, we must be careful to put into his hands such books as reflect the manners and language of daily life. He must not be transported into the world of ideas, but into the world of tangible objects and everyday facts. No matter whether the book we give him may be called rubbish from an intellectual and literary standpoint, so long as it is *clean* rubbish, lighted up with a sparkle of everyday humor and wholesomeness, it is the right sort of material for exercise in the language of daily life. No foreigner would ever learn to speak our lan-

ge by reading *The Merchant of Venice* or *Paralost*, nor are *Faust* and *Le Cid* proper models



for the spoken language of Germany and France, however noble they may be as models of literary and intellectual power.

Four years of such careful drill in reading, speaking, and writing the language of daily life ought to result in a fair command of it. We have yet to learn the outcome of either of these two methods of language study; for, at present, our work is a mixture of both. We pass from the simple to the complex, from a fairy tale to *Faust*, with hardly any transition stage. We mingle the vocabularies of widely separated centuries and widely different dialects and provinces with the vocabulary of daily life; in short, we are groping haphazard, without a definite end in view, and in that case can hardly miss failure.

With regard to Latin and Greek, the situation is hardly more favorable. The result by no means justifies the labor and time expended upon these languages, and this department of school and college work finds itself in the embarrassing predicament of being obliged to prove that it has a right to exist at all as an essential part of the education of the young. Perhaps the question could very easily be decided, if we should only frankly admit publicly, what we know privately; namely, that far from being a necessity, it is not even a luxury to ninety-nine one-hundredths of those who study it, for they find



neither enjoyment nor culture in it. To the remaining one-hundredth per cent it is a necessity as well as a luxury. The question is therefore reduced to this: Out of a thousand pupils, have we a right to establish a chair of ancient languages for ten of them? Most assuredly we have! If there were only one pupil a year who really needed Latin and Greek as a part of his intellectual equipment, he should not be denied the right to have it in whatever public institution he may chance to be educated. The gardener takes especial care of his best plants; he watches eagerly for any sign of superior qualities in order to foster them and create a more excellent variety. He does not neglect them to prop up the weaklings. We should do likewise in our gardens of the young. Therefore Latin and Greek for the sake of the superior few should always be retained in the curriculum of every institution of liberal culture. The great mistake we make is to suppose them of any value to the immense majority.

I have said that in the village school in which our valiant woman taught there was a Latin class of two pupils. One of these was a good Latin scholar, and his teacher was the only one of her kind in the neighborhood. The other was a poor creature, whose only interest in the study of Latin as a subject was that it was a part of the curriculum, even when it went no farther than to be read. The teacher was inclined to think that an

equally valuable discipline might be more profitably obtained in other directions. Inquiring about it of her scholarly friends, she quotes the following letter from a distinguished lawyer, the argument of which may very well stand for the usual plea in favor of classical learning:

"I was admitted to the high school," he writes, "when I was twelve years old. . . . Of grammar, I knew worse than nothing, for I had studied it in the old-fashioned way, just long enough to gain an acquired ignorance of the whole subject. A year after I entered the high school, I began the study of Latin, and then the darkness that had hung over the English grammar was lifted; for Latin is an inflected language, and from the changing terminations one learns what is meant by the agreement of words in the application of the rules of syntax. Without being aware of it, I had gained some insight into the philosophy of language. I believe no time is wasted in the study of Latin, even when children go no farther than to learn the rudiments of the language. There is no intellectual discipline to compare with it in range of power; and in its literary influence it endows the mind with another sense."

This is the grateful tribute of one to whom Latin was a source of light and power, but he was *not* an ordinary pupil. Another very timely tribute to the

disciplinary value of classical training appears in the presidential address of H. A. Miers, rector of the London University. This address was delivered in 1910 at Sheffield before the educational science section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Miers says:

“What sort of school education affords the best preparatory training for the university? I have often heard it asserted that if a boy is capable of taking up at the university a course which is entirely different from his school course, he will generally be found to have come from the classical side and not the modern side. An ordinary modern-side boy is rarely able to pursue profitably a literary career at the university, whereas it often happens that ordinary classical-side boys make excellent scientific students, after they have left school. I am bound to say that this is, on the whole, my own experience. It suggests that a literary education at school is at present a better intellectual training for general university work than a scientific education. If this be so, what is the reason?

“There are no doubt many causes which may contribute. In some schools, the brighter boys are still retained on the classical side, while those who are more slow are left to find their way to other subjects; and some whose real tastes have been sup-



pressed by the uniformity of the school curriculum turn with relief to new studies at the university and pursue them with zeal. But the facts do also, I think, point to some defect in the present teaching of school science, whereby a certain narrowness and rigidity of mind are rendered possible. . . ."

The fact that it is the brightest boys who profit by classical training is confirmed by the experience of the past as well as the present; and it is a great mistake to suppose that disinclination to classical studies among the majority is anything peculiar to our age. In the very blossom and fruit time of classical learning, Melanchthon, as reported by Paulsen in his excellent *Geschichte des Gelehrten Unterrichts*, complains of the indifference to Greek of students in general, and says: "As Homer was a beggar during his lifetime, so he goes begging to-day for listeners, so great is the contempt for what is most excellent;" and he says of Latin in one of his discourses *de miseriis paedagogorum*, that "the complaint of Æsop's ass that he will be killed by the daily hardships of his life, is also the lament of the schoolmaster. Whenever the parents cannot get on with their boy any longer, they send him to the schoolmaster. The master speaks to him. The boy is absent-minded. The master hears the lesson; the boy delights to vex him with his mistakes. An eter-



nity passes before he knows his alphabet. This is the prelude; now he is to learn Latin. He is spoken to in Latin, and he scrapes together an answer in his mother tongue. He is forced to try Latin, and good heavens, what a spectacle he makes of himself! First, he stands there, dumb as a statue; then he collects his wits, hunts for words, and in so doing rolls his eyes around and opens his mouth and gasps like an epileptic. Finally, he utters a sound, but in order not to be caught in an error he murmurs unintelligibly,—many boys really show a genuine virtuosity in swallowing the final syllable. ‘Speak plainer,’ shouts the teacher. He repeats what he has said, and what verbal monsters, contrary to all grammar and Latinity, he utters! It is deplorable! The pupils abhor nothing more than this. They must be reminded every day; and with indescribable difficulty, the teacher manages to get out of them one short letter in a semester. If a verse is required, the teacher himself must set about it, dictate the argument, supply the words, and the dictation is copied unwillingly. Almost no one can be brought to do it alone, of his own accord. Then comes the correcting. The grammatical errors are corrected; the obscure passages and ambiguous expressions are cleared up. The roughness is smoothed over, and the language is enlivened with figures and

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made more agreeable. Finally, with the more advanced pupils, attention must be given to the tenor and the morality of the composition. Some boys incline to mockery, others to frivolity or arrogance, and the morals appear in the style. A celebrated general says that three things appertain to fighting; namely, that the soldiers take pleasure in it, that they show a feeling of honor, and that they can obey. The schoolmaster general cannot presuppose any one of these essentials. His pupils have no pleasure in their work, no feeling of honor, no spirit of obedience. Most of them would rather dig ditches than learn Latin. Really, teaching a camel to dance or an ass the musical scale would be a more endurable task."

So much for Latin in the early years of the sixteenth century. Really it is difficult to decide in this case which deserved more pity, the teacher or the pupil. Certainly neither had an enviable task, and when we speak with regret of the decline of classical learning, we must not forget at what a tremendous sacrifice of time and labor, of tears and groans, of despair and disgust, a mastery of Latin and Greek was acquired by the scholars of the Renaissance.

In the middle ages, education simply meant a mastery of Latin and Greek; for, with few exceptions, the only science and literature worth knowing were

written in these languages, and so powerful was the influence of the zealous study of the classics that it was believed possible to revive Greek and Latin as literary and spoken languages. They were studied for that purpose. The mother tongue was practically abandoned. Many savants refused to learn any modern language. Erasmus never spoke anything but Latin, and though he traveled in Italy refused to learn the language, and after living in France some time was not ashamed to say, "Who would not think me ridiculous if I should utter an opinion of a French book, I who know nothing at all of the language?" In the early half of the sixteenth century, literary Germany is really a Latin country, more than two thirds of the literature being Latin, scarcely one third German.

In our day of small achievements in the classics, it is interesting to know just how this wonderfully effective result was brought about; and it is not only interesting but encouraging, because it shows us that we are doing just as much as can be reasonably expected of us under the circumstances, and in accordance with the demands of the present age. Here I shall quote again from Paulsen:

"Until the close of the eighteenth century, all students of the German universities were giving their attention either to theology or jurisprudence, in



both of which subjects eloquence and readiness of speech were the first requirements. The learned world of that time lived under the impression that in all that is really essential, the Greeks had carried scientific knowledge to an end. The idea of proceeding farther was as remote to the humanists as to the scholastics, perhaps even more remote. Therefore the task of the savant was to draw from that source of wisdom with confidence and to make use of what he learned with good taste. Literary ambition, accordingly, was concentrated upon rhetorical discourse. In our day we easily excuse any deficiency in form, for the sake of the content. Not so the humanist. Sturm judges in this way: 'Knowledge of things without tasteful presentation is barbarous and ugly, and with the corruption of form, there creeps in among men an arrogant opinion of their own wisdom.' All the humanists judge in this manner. Melanchthon in *Encomium eloquentiæ* is of the opinion that 'any one who attempts the sciences without the *artes dicendi* must miserably fail: insight follows eloquence as the shadow the body.' For humanism, the formula is unusually characteristic. One would naturally suppose that with insight comes the power of speech. To humanism, it is exactly the contrary. With the loss of speech,—and this is the constantly presented philosophical history of



humanism,—the middle ages lost not merely good taste, but also science, morality, and religion.

“The instruction of the higher schools, as a whole, was always directed towards the University, out of which it comes, and into which it flows, as the rivers receive their water from the sea, and give it back again. The task of this instruction was to prepare for the acquisition of eloquence. Reading and exercises, exposition and composition, as they were technically called, were carried on at the University in essentially the same manner, except, of course, that the instruction had a more elementary and scholastic character.

“There are three natural grades of these exercises. . . . In the first, reading and writing were learned from the Latin primer, and a small number of Latin words was faithfully drilled into the memory. In the second grade, the study of grammar was formally continued; first the formal rules (*etymologia*) and then the syntax were learned by heart and exercised on reading matter. The generic name of the little grammatical text-books of the first grade continued to be *Donatus*. As text-books, little conversation books were used, such as Mosellan's *Pädologie*, the *Colloquia* of Erasmus, to which, in the course of the sixteenth century, were added many new ones, such as *S. Heydani*, *Corderi colloquia*,

*Camerarii praecepta morum ac vitae*, *Castalionis dialogi sacri*, and others. Along with these books were first used the ancient authors, the Latin Æsop, Terence, and now and then something from Plautus; later Sturm's *Selections from Cicero's Letters* was a very popular text-book. The principle guiding the choice is expressed in the Lüneberger school regulation, '*Gudt Latyn und fyn sententien.*' A twofold advantage is expected from the latter; namely, that speech is enriched and the morals improved. Concerning the method of elementary instruction in Latin, the Würtemberg school regulation gives detailed directions in order to show the teacher how to make as easy as possible for the boys the greatest difficulties in the language. The reading text was begun by the teacher's expounding it; that is, he gave the pupil a literal translation of it word for word, and required the pupil to repeat it after him, and to repeat it again the next day. In addition to that, every word that appeared was grammatically analyzed with regard to its relation in the sentence, and when necessary, it was declined or conjugated. . . .

"The reading exercises were completed by exercises in writing (*exercitia styli*). Every Wednesday, so prescribes the Würtemberg regulation, a brief, easy argument from the last lesson is to be put into German. As many expressions and words of the

original Latin as is compatible with a change of text are retained. This is now to be dictated to the boys, and the place where the argument is to be found in the text is shown them, so that they may have some sort of a guide, and may more easily imitate the '*phrases autorum*' out of the given '*lectionibus*'; but the teacher is to change the *genera, numeros, personas, casus, modos, and tempora*.

"On the following Friday the teacher collects the essays from the boys and shows each of them, in a plain and friendly manner, the mistakes and defects of his composition. A great deal of patience is required for this task, especially in '*exercitia styli*,' for, as the boys frequently fail, they will become discouraged and listless if they are harshly censured.

"After the elementary grammar has been learned, the real instruction in eloquence may begin in the third grade. The grammatical study is repeated, broadened, deepened, and completed by rhetoric and dialectics. The reading is more extensive. Virgil and Cicero make the substance of the school reading in Latin of the upper grades; but Terence, Ovid, as well as Horace and Catullus are read. Cicero appears to have the preference over other prose writers. Here, too, theoretical instruction and reading go hand in hand. Rhetoric



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and dialectics find their application in Cicero's *Orationes*. . . .

“Practice in writing, from the lowest to the highest grade, keeps step with practice in speaking. In the upper grades, as well as in the University, Latin is the medium of oral instruction and social intercourse among teachers and pupils. The Universities and Gymnasien are like isolated and dispersed provinces of an international kingdom of learning in which Latin is the language of the country, and the use of any other is forbidden by punishment. In all the school regulations of the sixteenth century, the law prevails that whoever in this island of the Latin tongue allows himself to be heard speaking the vulgar tongue is to be punished. Spies are appointed to see that the law is not violated, and any culprit found is to be branded by the placard *asinus*, which must be worn where it is plainly visible. Whoever has to wear this badge of disgrace three times, and whoever has to wear it last, *poenas luet natibus*. . . .

“The completion of eloquence is poetry, that is, readiness of representation in rhythmical speech. It is absolutely indispensable to the real savant. ‘Whoever has not exercised himself in poetry,’ writes Melanchthon in a letter to Micyllus in 1526, . . . ‘has no correct judgment in any department of learning, and even the prose which is not based on poetical

art is wanting in taste and strength.' Melanchthon's judgment, often repeated in his letters and other writings, is an expression of the general opinion of all humanists. Latin verses are the masterpieces of the arts. Nobody is a master of eloquence who has not the power of poetical representation, therefore the humanists everywhere call themselves poets and are known as such. This opinion is, of course, based upon the idea that poetry is an art which can be learned by anybody through diligence and practice, even if a natural talent for it is not equally distributed among all men. This is one of the fundamental views of humanism; it rules all poetical literature up to the *Sturm und Drang* epoch, which, looked at from this point of view, may be regarded as a revolt against the æsthetic ideas of humanism. This accepted idea of the importance of poetry is the reason of the school exercises in verse. It was not assumed that every pupil would make his mark as a poet, but he must at least learn to make his distichs for domestic use, since the practice would give excellence to his prose; much as an athlete must practice leaping with weights, in order to make a much longer jump without them. Poetical school exercises began in the upper grade with the learning of poetical rules, and prosody, and practice in verse making. . . . As late as the nineteenth cen-

tury, in many schools, Latin verses were the final standard of progress, or, at least, of distinction. . . .

"Instruction in reading and writing Latin begins when the pupil is six years old. At nine, he begins the formal study of grammar; at twelve, instruction in eloquence and imitation of authors, which continues until he is seventeen, to which is added a two years' course in *artibus*."

This quotation is sufficient to show us that a mastery of Latin and Greek was acquired at the expense of the mother tongue throughout the entire school life. We could not pay that price for it now, simply because the results would not justify it. We know that the ancients had by no means exhausted the riches of science, nor the riches of thought and feeling. Other great national literatures have arisen as well worth our time and study as that of the ancients. Besides, the ancient writers have all been so adequately translated, that it is not necessary to know Latin and Greek in order to familiarize ourselves with their thought. Hence the reaction against classical studies, so noticeable at present, and so much deplored by the lovers of Latin and Greek that they are willing to make almost any concession in the manner of teaching them, in order to retain them in the curriculum of the secondary schools. But their problem is much simpler than that of the mod-



far more valuable to him than knowing that the subjunctive is required in indirect discourse. How the advantage of the seeing eye might be brought home to him in Cæsar's experience with the merchants. Before setting out for Great Britain, he called a council of merchants from all sides to find out from them something about the island and its inhabitants, but he could learn nothing from them. They could not tell him the size of the island, nor the number of its inhabitants, nor what manner of men they were, nor how they fought, how they lived, or what sort of harbors they had. Yet these merchants had been trading with Britain for many years. But they had eyes and intelligence only for their articles of trade. Again, Cæsar's indomitable courage cannot but awaken a wholesome admiration, if dwelt upon with any degree of enthusiasm. No difficulty discourages him. It seems as if he, too, had left the word "impossible" out of his vocabulary. He comes to the Rhine with a large army. In ten days he builds a bridge for their crossing, and the important thing is *not* whether he built it near the present site of Bonn or not, but that he *did* build it in this short space of time, and was not hindered by the waters in his determination to march onwards. And what firmness he adds to his courage! He knew men through and through. His "no" is no, and his

"yes" is yes; there is no wavering in purpose. When he crosses into Britain for the second time, he fears an uprising of the Gauls, and to check it, he decides to force his captives, his hostages, to take the voyage with him. Dumnorix the Æduan begs to be allowed to stay; he says that he is afraid of the journey, and finally urges his religious scruples against it. But Cæsar is inflexible, and will not heed his entreaties, and when he escapes in the confusion of breaking up camp, Cæsar sends after him, commanding him to be taken dead if he cannot be taken alive, and Dumnorix is killed.

When Cæsar is absent from his soldiers, the heart and head are gone. There is neither true counsel nor true courage among them. Witness the dissensions in camp in Book V, the controversy as to whether the soldiers shall take the enemy's advice and leave their winter quarters, or stay where they are. At last they yield to the promptings of fear and break up camp, only to find the enemy lying in ambush for them. What a picture of confusion follows! Titurius, who had counseled the movement, loses his presence of mind. Lucius Cotta, who had been against it, performs the duties of a general. He orders the soldiers to leave their baggage and draw up in a circle. But it is not Cæsar who commands and infuses his own splendid courage and firmness into the

soldiers, and what weeping we have! What scrambling after what each soldier holds dearest in his baggage! The future vanishes in the fleeting present as it does with all short-sighted people. Contrast with this weakness of the Romans the fine counsel of the barbarian leaders at this moment. No plundering! No touching now what these Romans are leaving! To the present business only, which is to rout them! And by this counsel they gain the day, and the Roman eagle trails a broken wing!

Add to this revelation of Cæsar's power his quick intelligence and eager curiosity in all directions. He is no mere brutal personification of egotism; he is a student, a thinker, an observer. The manners and religion of the Gauls interest him keenly and he gives a terse account of them, thus bequeathing a valuable contribution to history. But we have also a singular instance of the fact that a man's judgment is limited by his experience and the knowledge of his era, in this same keen-sighted, brilliant Cæsar who shows a remarkable credulity in reporting the strange beasts to be found in the Hercynian forest;—the beast with one horn in the middle of its forehead, the elks without joints, that are unable to lie down and when they wish to rest lean against trees.

Surely the detaching of a great personality like that of Cæsar with all its inspiring qualities of courage,



firmness, intellectual curiosity, and sympathy with his fellow-soldiers, the simplicity of his life among them, the endurance of personal discomfort, fatigue, hunger, cold, is really the valuable kernel underneath the husk and shell of the Latin language for the student of the *Commentaries*, and he should not be deprived of his kernel, after struggling with the shell and the husk. In the same way Cicero's orations furnish valuable opportunities for teaching political truths, and in Virgil the student drinks from the fountain of poetry itself, and his imagination should be delighted and stimulated. This delight, this inspiration, this privilege of associating with the courageous, the strong, the eloquent, the noble, are the reasons why Latin and Greek are studied. This is intellectual discipline in the highest sense, and parsing and construing are but the steps which lead to the entrance of this temple of intellectual joy. It is because the student so rarely gets beyond the steps that the value of classical studies has been so generally denied in our day.

In a review of Ludwig Hahn's *Public Instruction in France*, which appeared in 1848, Renan quotes with approval the German professor's criticism of university instruction in the classics; and because it is as true to-day and in other countries than France

as when it was first written, it deserves to be repeated here.

“It heaps up with superabundance classical material, but without vivifying it by the literary spirit; the antique forms circulate daily, but the sense of antique beauty is profoundly wanting; polished stones are laboriously collected for building, but they never rise in a harmonious edifice; the student never passes from an arid exercise of intelligence to a vital nourishment of the entire spiritual man. Everything is limited to mean and narrow applications: in place of strengthening the intellectual faculties, in place of a development in which beauty of form is in harmony with the progress of reason, the student simply acquires a singular skill in disguising to himself and to others emptiness of thought under a hollow, dazzling, and pompous form. It is imagined that the philological traditions of Port Royal are preserved and continued; the nation has been promised fruits comparable to those produced by this vigorous school,—a new golden age in literature; but it has not been perceived that of all this classical culture, the bark and not the fruit has been seized, so that instead of elevating the mind, this culture has ended only in increasing the malady of the century wholly external in its thinking and profoundly attacked by materialism. A narrow and

formal spirit is the characteristic trait of instruction in France: it is not a true culture of the mind: it is the caricature of it."

When we try to estimate the value of languages as a means of this "true culture of the mind," we ought to think carefully over the trenchant presentation of the matter by Trapp, professor of pedagogy at the University of Halle in the eighteenth century, in the following lines: "Language consists of the symbols of ideas. An idea needs only one symbol to be understood or to be communicated. If I could say the Lord's Prayer in a hundred languages, I could not understand it any better. A multitude of languages does not lead to an improvement and increase of ideas. This end is rather hindered than advanced by the learning of many languages, for time and strength are exhausted in this direction which might have been employed in increasing the store of ideas. The learning of a foreign language is therefore a necessary evil,—necessary on account of the unavoidable association between nations, not only for the sake of trade and commerce, but also for the communication of knowledge."



## CHAPTER IV

### INSTRUCTION IN SCIENCE AND HISTORY

IN that terrible and pathetic satire on practical education, *Hard Times*, Dickens makes Thomas Gradgrind, the schoolmaster of facts, say to his children, Louisa and Thomas, who have been caught peeping under a tight board fence to catch a glimpse of some strolling actors:

“ ‘ You! Thomas and you, to whom the circle of sciences is open; Thomas and you who may be said to be replete with facts; Thomas and you who have been trained to mathematical exactness! Thomas and you, here! In this degraded position! I am amazed! ’ ”

Mrs. Gradgrind feebly reinforces the amazement with a command to the children to “ go and be somethingological directly.”

When in the face of the elaborate instruction in the physical sciences, mathematics, and logic, given so freely and with such apparent thoroughness to the youth of the United States, we find so great a number of our citizens adopting with enthusiasm the wildest vagaries of thought, or rather thought-

lessness, travestying science in the name of religion, and accepting the phenomena of hypnotism and hysteria as evidence of the divine afflatus, making new faith-cloaks out of old, worn-out rags of superstition, preaching senseless negations of facts and the silliest optimism in the face of the saddest tragedies, peeping at the occult through the tight board fence of materialism, we are tempted to repeat Gradgrind's cry of amazement, and to ask ourselves of what educational service our facts, our mathematics, our logic have been to our Thomases and Louisas, when they have ended in their absolute incapacity to reason! There is only one conclusion at which it is possible to arrive, and that is, that the main purposes for which science is studied have been lost sight of in a superfluity of details in instruction.

What are these main purposes? To awaken a spirit of observation and furnish to the mind material for exhaustless wonder and delight. To give breadth and tolerance to the mind and clear it of base fears and superstitions. To produce an open, unprejudiced attitude of the intellect, equally remote from blind faith in the power of human reason and from an obstinate skepticism concerning its power to arrive at truth. Both attitudes are equally superficial, says Poincaré. "To doubt everything  
to believe everything are two solutions equally

convenient, for they both exempt us from thinking." And it ought also to be the purpose of science to furnish a certain degree of practical skill in the application of what has been learned, to the common needs of daily life. To know the principles of the ventilation of buildings; to be able to find the points of the compass in a wood; to know the medical properties of common plants, and the conditions for fertility of soil; to know how to take care of the body, and the nutritive value of different foods; to be familiar with simple practical expedients in case of accidents,—surely all these things are eminently worth while.

The trouble with the teaching of science is that we are more intent upon *naming* things than in *knowing* them and coming into loving and intimate relations with them. This wonderful nature in which we are submerged as the fish in water, is less to our girls than a bright ribbon or a new hat, and far less interesting to our boys than a tennis racket or a football. Thoreau records that he once received from the secretary of the Association for the Advancement of Science at Washington a circular requesting him to fill out the blanks opposite certain questions, the most important of which was: "In what branch of science are you particularly interested?" He says: "How absurd, that though I probably stand as near



to nature as any of them, and am by constitution as good an observer as most, yet a true account of my relations to nature would excite their ridicule only. If it had been the secretary of an association of which Plato or Aristotle was the president, I should not have hesitated to describe my studies at once, and particularly."

It was because his facts had flowered and fruited into truths that fed his soul that he knew that they would not be recognized by the Scientific Association at Washington. It was because nature had become to him, not something that he could weigh and measure, but an infinitely sweet and subtle companion, full of suggestiveness, full of inspiration, keeping him always true to his highest instincts, and lifting him above the ordinary level of coarse ambitions and vulgar hopes and fears.

"The philosophic spirit," says Fouillée, "is recognized in the sciences as in literature, according to Leibnitz, by the fact that it searches in everything for what is the highest: *investigandum in unoquoque genere summum*. There, too, is the whole secret of instruction. But to make known to others the summits of things, we must have climbed up to them ourselves."

My valiant teacher had climbed these summits. For her, too, fact had blossomed into truth and joy

and she found the noblest pleasure in the simplest things, because she could weave about them so much vivid fancy and living thought. She takes a car ride, finds the scarlet pimpernel at the end of it, and is happy for the day. She loves the wild flowers as if they were human and regrets that she scarcely meets any one who loves them so well as the garden flowers. Nothing disagreeable ever keeps her from her forest friends. She calls it paying the price for her pleasure. The pine woods of New Jersey, the forests of Massachusetts and Michigan, the prairies of Illinois and Missouri, the hillsides of Southern California, and the plains of New Mexico are her favorite haunts. She never tires of expressing her joy and wonder at the beauty of the world which the masses never know, because they are absorbed in the finery of man's make. She carries about with her the freedom and grace that belong to the large, fluid, unconventional life of nature-lovers. There is the sweet breath of the fresh air in her manner, in her thoughts, as if with her it were spring and the growing time all the year round.

To love in this way the beauty and wonders of nature in their various manifestations, to catch a glimpse of the heights, even if they may not be climbed, and feel the pettiness of the countless trivialities that seam and scar our life with fact and worry

seems to me one of the most vital aims of scientific study for the great majority of pupils, who will not specialize in any branch of it after leaving school.

It must never be forgotten that mere facts do not constitute knowledge, but only the raw material of it, and for the pupils whom we have just mentioned, there is a vast amount of dry, unnecessary details in the text-books now in use which it would be far better to omit. I allude particularly to the puzzling problems in physics and chemistry, the accumulation of technical terms and symbols, and the detailed description of complicated machines concerning which it is not at all necessary to be informed in order to know the vital facts of the science in question. Then, too, the utterly uninteresting manner of presenting these facts acts as a narcotic instead of a stimulant on the immature intellect, so that any series of ably written lectures on scientific subjects, like those of Tyndall or Huxley, for example, would produce a profounder and more lasting impression upon the pupil and therefore be immensely more valuable than the text-books. But we can never hope for any such exchange. Pedantry is as timid in the presence of original thought as a hare before the hunter. Besides, all text-books quietly draw a veil over the most important conclusions of science and confine themselves to defining and explaining definitions, so that



the pupil may be said to hold out his hand for bread only to receive a stone. No wonder, then, that he seeks his bread elsewhere and sometimes mistakes a sponge for it; and yet there is such good bread in the study of science to be had for the proper working for it, that it is a shame to have furnished our schools with such costly laboratories just to miss it, as the prevalent superstitions of our country prove that we have done.

The most eminent teachers of science in our country feel keenly that much time is lost by the pupil's hopelessly floundering in a confusion of words that speak to no experience which he has had, and that new and difficult subjects should be studied in the class room under the intelligent guidance of the teacher. In the course of an article on *Physics and Manual Training*, Principal G. B. Morrison of the McKinley High School, St. Louis, says pertinently:

“The mistake made in teaching physics lies in presenting formulas for verification, instead of constructing formulas from experience. A formula should be nothing more than a statement in mathematical form of something which the student knows from experience, seen in his experiments — nothing but a writing down in simple symbolic language the generalized results of his work, simply stating what he already knows. The formula is of use to him, be-

cause it may serve a purpose in other and transposed forms in the solution of problems involving calculations which transcend experimentation. But the general formula is not only easy of comprehension, but it is already known as soon as the student has really grasped anything of the real content of the principle sought. The trouble is not that too much and too early mathematics is insisted on, but that the mathematics is presented at the wrong end of the process.

"I shall agree that the high school text-books are not only faulty in method of presentation, but that they are growing worse! They begin by a mathematical statement 'to be proved' instead of ending with a mathematical statement of facts actually seen, and I am at a loss to understand how men competent to grasp the subject of physics and to write books on it can so completely ignore the first principles of mental acquisition, and leave entirely out of consideration the mind of the pupil beginner.

"Take for illustration an example from one of the too numerous popular text-books: under the topic of acceleration, the author first gives a formal definition of acceleration in the following words: 'Acceleration is the time rate of change of velocity.' This must be a precious morsel to a young beginner who has never in his life had any conscious experi-

ence in observing either 'time rate' or 'acceleration'! This is followed by 'formulas for uniformly accelerating motion,' as follows: 'Let  $a$  be the acceleration or the gain in velocity per second acquired in a second of time (unless otherwise stated, the unit of time used will be the second, common or mean solar time, of which there are 86,400 in a mean solar day). Then in  $t$  seconds, the velocity acquired will be  $v = at$ . Since the gain in velocity is uniform, if the body starts from rest, the average for  $t$  seconds is  $\frac{1}{2}(0 + at)$  or  $\frac{1}{2} at$ . The distance passed over in  $t$  seconds is then  $\frac{1}{2} at \times t$  or  $\frac{1}{2} at^2$ . Hence  $s = at^2$ .'

"I of course do not complain of the accuracy of these statements. I quote them simply to show how ridiculous is such an introduction to this subject to an inexperienced beginner. Following this formula is given a list of problems to be solved by it. The student having no actual conception of the true relations of the facts which these symbols represent hunts through his problem for what he thinks corresponds to the symbol for 'distance,' for 'acceleration,' and for 'time' and substitutes these in his 'formula.' This involves no more thought than would be required in hunting among a lot of assorted corks for the right ones to fit bottles of various sizes. Atwood's Machine, an apparatus for showing accel-



erated motion, is given in the book just quoted several pages in advance of these problems as 'an experimental proof' of the law of accelerated motion.

"Now, if a beginner started with this, or better, with a simple ball and inclined plane, he could see the acceleration, and time it in a very simple and natural way, and a record of his observations would constitute his formula — nothing more than an abbreviated generalized statement of what he had seen. When a problem is then stated, he thinks in form, instead of in the symbol. In other words, he usually thinks, instead of groping after the intangible. He is not discouraged, because he knows what he is doing. He likes physics, because he understands it. The mathematics as such disappears, and he rapidly acquires a grasp and an easy comprehension of the whole subject. Accuracy in experimentation becomes a pleasure, because a necessity. The student's pleasure grows with his own conscious power, which as we all know is the keenest of all human pleasures.

"Every teacher seems ready to accept as sound pedagogics that, in teaching, we should proceed from the concrete to the abstract; but in most of our modern text-books the reverse is actually practiced. It would be more in accordance with sound teaching to open the subject of accelerated motion

with a picture of a boy sliding downhill, than with a meaningless formula. In looking at the picture, the student immediately associates the lesson with a pleasurable experience, the philosophy of which he is eager to comprehend. This comprehension comes to his mind in all its fullness in the formula which results from the experience of this observation, but never from the formula before the terms of which have become symbolic of his actual perceptions. There is a place for the picture, and a place for the formula; the one gives a natural and pleasurable introduction, the other gives a satisfying sense of power possessed by every conclusion reached by normal processes. . . .

“Instead of deferring mathematics to the latter part of the student’s course, *I would defer it to the latter part of each lesson.* . . . Of course, I do not mean that elementary students are brought at once to expressions involving mathematics which they have not mastered, or that the elementary lesson should be final; far from it. I simply mean that mathematics, as an important and necessary tool of physics study, should be employed by the student from the first to the last day of his course.

“The ‘fascination’ of the lecture . . . has its dangers. Important as it is that the interest of the student be secured, it should not be done at the ex-

pense of the working power of the mind. It must be confessed that the 'fascinating' lecture too often obstructs the progress of the student. He comes to regard the subject as a sort of vaudeville show, or an exhibition of sleight of hand which begins and ends in mere entertainment. It is not uncommon to see an audience held in almost breathless attention by some scientific spellbinder, while he 'demonstrates' the wondrous laws of the known and the unknown by skillfully manipulated apparatus, and it is notable how little the audience really knows of the principles treated, after the lecture is over and the 'fascination' wears off. This kind of treatment may make pupils 'walking interrogation points about ether, atoms, X-rays, nature of electricity, etc.,' but it does little toward giving them the power of intelligently answering these interrogations. The lecture may have its use, but it becomes dangerous as a teaching agency when followed as a business.

"The problem of teaching physics properly is not one especially of the high schools or the college; it is one including as a necessary part of the process a proper study of the mind of the student. Lack of interest and comprehension of physics is quite as common among college 'men' as among high school boys, and proper presentation in college classes is no more common than it is in the high school."



The teaching implied in this quotation is that which leads to the chewing and digesting of information, instead of bolting it whole to be relieved of it in the same condition. It is the building up of definitions through experience, step by step in a logical proceeding, instead of starting with them, as is the common practice. Interest and attention are maintained because the pupil himself is at work and naturally is always more interested in what he does himself than in what is done for him. To keep up this interest in natural phenomena Herbert Spencer suggests that young people should always have on their minds problems to be solved concerning what they observe in their surroundings and in human life; and adds that "a teacher who understood his business would be continually desiring questions of these and countless other kinds to which no answers could be found in books, and would persistently refuse to give the answers: leaving the question to be puzzled over for years if need were. The mental exercise which solving one such question implies is of more value than that implied by a dozen rote-learnt lessons."

Spencer is right, because the one fundamental truth not to be lost sight of in teaching any branch of natural science is the truth of relation and of sequence; the one error to be guarded against, the

mistaking of coincidences for causes. The student is not to become a "laboratory rat," as Claude Bernard calls the master of any department of experimental science, but he is to know the larger generalizations of the specialist's work, and their bearing on the great problems of human life. He is to know the difference between a hypothesis and a verified fact, so that he cannot be thrown into a state of absolute negation of the value of science, when he sees a cherished hypothesis abandoned to make room for a better one. He is to love truth far better than his fancied notions of what it is or ought to be, and he is to scorn no form of it, even when it is most unflattering to his vanity.

What has been said of the teaching of physics applies to all other branches of natural science; the essential is not to be crowded out by the unimportant. The *naming* of things is not to be confused with the *knowing* of them. Concerning anatomy and physiology, Sir John Russell Reynolds, president of the Royal College of Physicians of London, says in one of a series of five *Essays and Addresses*:

"It has always appeared to me that a vast amount of valuable time is literally wasted on anatomy, and especially that branch of it termed descriptive anatomy. . . . What is the good of all this? How much of minute descriptive anatomy do we any of us

remember? How much less do we find of real value in our daily work? How should we stand in a stiff examination now? We should many of us positively flounder on our 'bones.' . . . For the practical use that is made of anatomy in after years, I believe that six months' genuine work would be fully sufficient, and the ordinary student would then save time to ground himself well, instead of 'grinding' himself wretchedly, in physiology, pathology, medicine, and surgery."

If this is true of the medical student whose life work it is to be, how much more is it true of the high school student or college man, for whom the subject simply happens to be in his course. What he needs particularly is acquaintance with the fundamental laws of health, the knowledge of how to take care of his body. He should know food values, the necessity of exercise, fresh air, the way to avoid taking cold, so that when he is really ill, he may not be at the mercy of faddists, or of those who deny the existence of his body. Even the correction of popular current fallacies would be of immense service to him; for example, "Feed a cold and starve a fever," which as originally and properly uttered, ran—"If you feed a cold, you will have a fever to starve." The public, in its heedless way of repeating an epigram, exactly reversed this one, so that many a body



already clogged with a cold has had its burden increased, instead of lightened, as it should be.

As for the science of mathematics, it, too, is not escaping the shears of the ruthless pruner. Valued traditionally as the science of pure thought, capable of training the mind to close logical thinking as no other branch of learning can possibly do it, it has been weighed in the balance and found singularly wanting. The truth is now universally recognized that while the mathematician may reason closely and accurately in the realm of space and numbers, he is no more exempt from failures in rational thinking in other directions than if he had never opened an algebra or geometry in his life. In his *Réforme de l'enseignement par la philosophie*, Fouillée admirably observes:

“The exclusive study of the sciences without philosophy is dangerous. The rigor of the mathematical method too often prevents the mathematician from having himself a rigorous intellect. His formulas think for him and he falls into the habit of using them without really thinking himself. It is the parrotism of which Leibnitz speaks, but a parrotism so well organized that in its own domain it ends with making words the instruments of truth. Unfortunately, outside of this domain, the automatism reappears, too frequently contenting itself with formulas

even when there are no longer any definite ideas in them. . . . Listen to a mathematician reason of things not mathematical: nine times out of ten, you will be struck with his incapacity of attention to several things together, with his feebleness of reasoning as soon as he is no longer sustained by symbols whose combinations are almost mechanical."

Mathematics is not, then, the open gateway to universal rationality. In fact, the most phenomenal calculators of whom we have any record seem rather to have been wanting in balance of mind than to have been remarkable for this poise. Neither can very much be said for the practical value of mathematics in the ordinary walks of life. Professor D. S. Smith of Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, says in his very interesting book, *The Teaching of Geometry*:

"Geometry is not studied and never has been studied because of its positive utility in commercial life or even in the workshop. . . . All of the facts that a skilled mechanic or an engineer would ever need could be taught in a few lessons. All the rest is either obvious, or is commercially or technically useless. . . . The actual amount of algebra needed by a foreman in a machine shop can be taught in about four lessons at the most. The necessary trigonometry may take eight more. . . . The boy who

takes such a course would know as much about mathematics as a child who has read ten pages in a primer would know about literature, but he would have enough for his immediate needs even though he had no appreciation of mathematics as a science. If any one asks if this is not all the school should give him, it might be well to ask if the school should give only the ability to read without the knowledge of any good literature; if it should give only the ability to sing without the knowledge of good music; if it should give only the ability to speak without any training in the use of good language, and if it should give a knowledge of home geography without any intimation that the world is round, an atom in the unfathomable universe about us. . . .

“There are relatively few propositions in geometry that have any practical applications that are even honest in their pretenses. . . . There is noble dignity in geometry . . . but the best way to destroy this dignity, to take away the appreciation of pure mathematics, and to furnish weaker candidates than now for advance in this field is to deceive our pupils and ourselves into believing that the ultimate purpose of mathematics is to measure things in a way in which no one else ever measures them, or has measured them.”

While insisting then that geometry as a subject



of cultural study has its value in the higher pleasure it affords to the mind, and the stimulus and uplift it gives, Professor Smith is not blind to the fact that comparatively few only are capable of getting the highest value from its study, and says that he recognizes "that the recent growth in popular education has brought into the high school a less carefully selected type of mind than was formerly the case, and that for this type a different kind of mathematical training will naturally be developed."

The fact that we must accommodate our food to the digestive capacity of the stomach, literally and figuratively, has led many thoughtful teachers to feel in the presentation of elementary geometry the necessity of interesting the pupil by giving a concrete setting to abstract principles, until by proper guidance he is gradually led to interest himself in the latter. Neither is the obvious relation of lines and angles, etc., to be insisted upon to the weariness of the pupil who feels that he is wasting his time in trivialities. "What's the use of it?" is the first question which the average pupil asks, and he can see no use in fruitless repetition of what he already knows, and he can see no service in speculations that do not lead to what he can touch and see. Therefore if his geometry can teach him to determine the height of a tree, or the distance from a given point to a

remote bowlder, he finds a result which he is able to appreciate, although he is as yet infinitely remote from the real purpose and dignity of his subject. Whether such superficial treatment of a great subject is worth while or not, is a debatable question which I shall not attempt to solve, but shall pass on to the consideration of history in our schools.

With regard to history, I shall not discuss the question whether it may or may not be properly called a science, contenting myself with remarking that the human factor introduces an element of uncertainty into every problem into which it enters; then, too, the human mind striving to reconstruct the past lends its personal coloring to the story so that we can never know the past as it really was. Professor G. Monod, teacher of history in the Parisian *Ecole des Hautes Etudes*, writes: "Zola defined art as 'nature seen through a temperament.' We, too, see historical reality through a temperament. We study it as history, but when we wish to reanimate it, in order to understand and represent it, we must exert a personal creative activity and add art to science. Historical reality is never known to us in the unconditioned and exact truth of its infinite complications. It is almost a dream-history."

Fouillée goes even farther and declares that, so far, history has not been what it should be, and is neither

a true science nor an art of really educational value; and that there never has been and never can be a perfectly exact and scientific history.

However, history continues to have an important place in our curriculum, and it is worth while to consider what is most essential in it for the culture of the young. Specialization has introduced into our high school and college work the very serious fault of exaggerated values. In the high schools of small towns where one teacher is supposed to conduct classes in any branch of the curriculum, a wise selection of material becomes absolutely necessary. History is the memory of the race, but like the individual memory, there is an enormous amount of its details which are forgotten or confused and are not worth recalling. So in the memory of the human race there should survive only the important events which have determined the trend of its progress in civilization. The quarrels of nations are often of no more importance than the street fights of boyhood, although the black eye may be remembered a long time after it has whitened. Schopenhauer declares that he knows no finer objection to the value of all historical study than the question, "If I had lived before all these things happened, then would I have been necessarily any the *less wise*?" If we should sift our histories according to this question, their volume would very



sensibly decrease. The essential thing in history is not the rise and fall of nations, but the growth and development of *ideas*,—the long struggle of the intelligence to adapt itself to new conditions, the transformation of the brute instincts of egotism into the highest social virtues: justice, courage, honor, truth, and unselfish compassion. This is the history of the race as it deserves to be remembered, and to be taught. This story is often summed up in the lives of heroes, and many thoughtful writers, Carlyle for example, have interpreted history as the biography of great men. The most eminent example of this interpretation is Plutarch's *Lives*, and so admirable a picture of the ancients do they give us, that a judicious reading of them is infinitely more valuable than the courses in ancient history offered by the public schools; for it is not, I repeat, the record of battles, the succession of kings, the recording of dates that make the study of history worth while; we can very well dispense with all that, and be none the poorer in wisdom. It is the philosophy of life which history should teach us to make it of any value to us. Then, too, a wise skepticism should accompany the study of history as well as the study of science. "You love truth," writes Voltaire to Mme. du Defand, "but let him catch it who can. I have searched for it all my life without finding it. I have

perceived only some glimmers which have been mistaken for it. That is why I have always preferred sentiment to reason."

Whether or not the preference be wise depends upon the outcome. The best part of life is unmistakably made up of illusions, and he who cannot lose his illusions without deep suffering and without losing his power to form just and right judgments,—he to whom they are the compass which directs his life and without which he is lost, had much better keep them till they naturally wear themselves out. I once heard a very clever man say that when, as a child, he was abruptly told that there is no Santa Claus, he was so deeply disturbed that he immediately lost his faith in God, heaven, and hell, thinking that they, too, were fictions of grown-up people to give authority to their wishes; and he suffered so intensely over his loss of faith that he doubted if he had ever really recovered from the shock. There are no severer judges than the young, or than women to whom the broad experiences of life are wanting, and great care should be taken not to shock them into hardness and cruelty of judgment. For this reason it is extremely unwise to reveal too early biographical or historical details which tend to degrade an eminent man in the eyes of the student. It is not with his faults as an erring human creature that the student is at all con-

cerned: it is with his services to humanity as a doer of great deeds and a thinker of great thoughts. I have heard a young girl declare emphatically that Benjamin Franklin could not possibly be a great man because he broke a youthful engagement; and another one, reading in her biographical introduction to the *Ancient Mariner* that Coleridge was addicted to the opium habit, and lived apart from his family the greater part of his life, exclaimed bitterly: "He ought to have been *hung*." It was impossible to reason her out of this opinion, and if it had been possible, there would have resulted a laxity of moral judgment widely different from the broad, safe tolerance of mature experience,—a laxity that would have subtly corrupted her rather than broadened and softened her. The mature grain needs to soften in the moisture of the earth before it can sprout into the living plant, but the unripe grain will only rot in this moisture. This is a point which cannot be too strongly insisted upon in this age of ours whose tendency is to strip the veils from everything, under the cry, *the truth can do no harm*.

Therefore, the wise teacher will not conceal the fact that, just as hypothesis plays a great part in science, so temperament, imagination, prejudice, superstition, play a great part in the writing of history, and truth is known approximately and relatively



rather than absolutely ; but he will not dwell too much upon this negative side, but will illuminate particularly the encouraging and optimistic aspect of human life. Whenever a great deed has incarnated a noble thought, he is there to mark it, and pass on its influence to another generation. But he is there, too, to note the falsity of certain ever recurrent ideas which result in dreams of impossible states of society, where, instead of the lion's lying down with the lamb, there will be no lions, but all lambs, because nature never intended there should be lions but only lambs, the lions having made themselves lions out of lambs, by a superior course of fattening on other lambs!

To most immature minds, novelty is the best recommendation for the acceptance of an idea, and the student's attention should be called to the fact that the fundamental ideas of communism and socialism are as old as tyranny and poverty, or any other of the countless forms of social oppression and misery by which the natural inequalities among man manifest themselves. The exodus of the Jews under the guidance of Moses, the revolution in Syracuse led by Agathocles, the laws of Lycurgus, the institutions of Solon, the secession of the plebeians in Rome, the insurrection of the gladiators, the revolt of the Gracchi, Catiline's conspiracy, the reforms of Dru-

sus, Wat Tyler's rebellion, Jack Cade's sedition, the rise of the English Commonwealth, the French Revolution, are all more or less salient crises in history that have grown out of sincere and well-meant or ambitious and self-seeking efforts to redress abuses or to establish social equality contrary to nature's express decree of inequality among men. These fundamental ideas in various forms have found their way into literature, from Plato's *Republic* to More's *Utopia* and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, not to speak of the Fouriers and Proudhons who have attempted to realize their ideals. The realization of them, frequently attempted, from the Spartan commonwealth to the Brook Farm idyll, has never been permanent, for the simple fact that their fundamental principles are false. But a bursted bubble is no guarantee that bubbles will never be blown again. They will be blown to the end of time, wherever there is plenty of air and plenty of soapsuds; and the airier they are, the more brilliantly will they catch the light and break it into rainbow hues to charm the eye. It cannot be said that the present-day bubbles of the Bebel type are particularly airy. There is too much soapsuds clinging to them. They do not free themselves well from Bebel's clay pipe. One part of his theory forgets the other. In reading his *Frau und der Sozialismus*, we are constantly reminded of that admirable

dialogue in the *Tempest* in which the exquisite common sense of Shakespeare has summed up for all time the absurdities of Utopianism:

*Gonzalo.* Had I plantation of this isle, my lord —

*Antonio.* He'd sow it with nettle seed.

*Sebastian.* Or docks or mallows.

*Gonzalo.* And were the king on't, what would I do?

*Sebastian.* 'Scape getting drunk for want of wine.

*Gonzalo.* I would by contraries

Execute all things: for no kind of traffic  
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;  
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,  
And use of service, none; contract, succession,  
Bourn, bound of land, tithe, vineyard, none;  
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil.  
No occupation, all men idle, all;  
And women too, but innocent and pure;  
No sovereignty —

*Sebastian.* Yet he would be king on't.

*Antonio.* The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

*Gonzalo.* All things in common; nature should produce  
Without sweat or endeavor; treason, felony,  
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine  
Would not have, but nature should bring forth  
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,  
To feed my innocent people.

*Sebastian.* No marrying among his subjects?

*Antonio.* None, man; all idle; whores and knaves.

In the same deliciously naïve manner would Bebel feed his innocent people, after practically putting labor out of the world, by exacting the minimum of it from each individual, and would preserve virtue by



welfare will put it out of the power of a few to profit at the expense of the many, and the words monopoly and trust will be obsolete, belonging only to the pages of the history of commercialism. There may come a time when the sentiment of a common humanity will not be limited by national boundaries, and war will cease and free trade be universally established. There may come a time when intelligence will be more widely esteemed than money or caste, and when intellect in a woman will nowhere be regarded as an impertinent infringement on the especial privilege of man; and when, in consequence, she herself will think more of her heart and mind than of the transitory charms of her face and the adornment of her body. The time may come too, when she will everywhere find the name of her sex no longer in the list with "paupers, insane, and idiots"; and when the right of suffrage, and the privilege of choosing her life work, will be granted to her without any hint of criticism. There may come the time when the workman will take pride in his work and will not wish to exact for it more than it is worth, and will have the desire, as well as the leisure, for a certain degree of culture. There may come a time when the ministers of public instruction will prefer the finest teachers to costly buildings and magnificently equipped laboratories, and when teach-

ers themselves will prefer in the young, thoroughness in a few essential subjects to the satisfied ignorance and inflated egotism which is the result of a superficial skimming of a great number of them. There may come a time when man, having outgrown the current idea that he is an irresponsible victim of environment and heredity, will take heart again and restore duty, ideality, self-control, and ceaseless effort to the program of his life, from which it is the fashion now to exclude them. In that case there will come again, and blessed be its coming! a time when old age will be once more venerable, because it will have behind it a youth and maturity of lofty effort and manly self-control. There may come a time when a life of idleness and pleasure will be generally regarded as a kind of moral and mental suicide, and a man will prefer with Cato to study Greek at eighty, to dying of paresis at forty.

These are all fine possibilities, not so near realization, perhaps, as we might wish them, but still so far from being visionary and fantastic that every lover of his kind might strive to the utmost in the direction of them without fear of wasting his efforts at baying the moon. But of a surety, there will never come a time when all men will be mentally, morally, and physically equal; when poverty and crime will cease to exist; when the earth will bring forth her fatness

without labor; when forests will be felled and cities built by touching an electric button; when evil will be eliminated by calling it good; when the sweet and beautiful sentiment of the family will be replaced by the sentiment of the race, and the home will be lost in the phalanstery; when progress towards differentiation in the form of individuality will cease, and retrogression bring about the primitive condition of social herds; when law will be an anachronism, because men will have become angels and need it no longer. It would seem that the French Revolution might have taught the world once for all the inexorable truth of these facts. Here was a colossal attempt to wipe out all natural as well as arbitrary distinctions of birth, to annihilate the mine and thine, to level mercilessly the crown with the hoe, and even to grind it into powder; but nature made haste to give birth to a king, and the crown was restored to fit the head of Napoleon.

Of all human utterances there is none so false, foolish, and misleading as that of the natural equality of men. Men are not born equal any more than the stars are created of equal size and brilliancy. The socialists of the Bebel type teach that inequality springs from the unequal division of external possessions, and that poverty, vice, and crime are the results of these unequal social conditions; or, to put it in



it with all the gold you choose, but until you clean the inside of it, it will never be a fit receptacle for wholesome food. So far is it from being true that social conditions breed inequality, that the state itself has arisen out of this very inequality. It meant originally the dominion of the strong over the weak, and only incidentally the protection of the latter by the former. The first man who carried his grievances to another and begged his advice and assistance in securing justice laid the foundation and proved the necessity of a state. The point is that he was powerless and another man strong, and he has an instinctive feeling that might does not make right. The state exists to affirm the principle of mutual dependence, and it carries out its protection of the weak to such lengths of sympathetic tolerance that in certain directions it is beginning to excite the disapproval of thinkers like Haeckel, who counsels, instead of the building of asylums, the chloroforming of idiots and the incurably insane, as well as of those hopeless invalids whose sufferings make life a torture to them and who desire to be rid of it.

The state abounds in charities of every description ; it is by no means the shield of the rich or their field for exploitation, as it has so often been called. That abuses also abound and that justice is not always incorruptible is also an undoubted fact, but this is due

where poverty is unknown, ought to be one of the happiest and most honorable. On the contrary, it has an infamous celebrity, and in the neighborhood its inhabitants are considered as robbers, brigands, and assassins. This celebrity does not date from yesterday. In the Italian chronicles of the middle ages, the name of Artena is often found, and its history may be summed up as a history of crimes. It might be said that brigandage, which to-day is dead everywhere else, has taken refuge in this little country, gaining in intensity what it has lost in extent. . . . A superficial observer would maintain that famine or scarcity of food is one of the most powerful causes of revolt or revolution. So all socialists seem to think, since they attribute the guilt of every crime to environment. But instead of that, famine alone produces neither revolution nor revolt. It only impels emigration to-day, as it did in the middle ages, when it lent an impulse to the Crusades. . . . Therefore it is not true that in extreme poverty all would become Jean Valjeans; for reality, more moral and more consoling than certain romancers, offers us the example of many obscure martyrs who prefer death to the abdication of their honor. It is not true that in extreme poverty the multitude always becomes rebellious. It is a vulgar prejudice that poverty and wretchedness are the cause of many crimes. It is a scientific prejudice

of an opposite character to attribute to genius almost no influence upon human events."

Perhaps no word in modern scientific use has been so much abused as the word "environment"; and no one has abused it more than the man who throws his conscience overboard with the exultant cry: "I am the son of my father and mother and all their ancestry, the passive creature of environment and heredity. Lay all my sins to them and the apes of the primeval forests." Comforting as this doctrine may be, it is not true. A man is not wholly the creature of environment and heredity. With him there came an entirely new force into the world which we call individuality. If environment and heredity were entirely the creators of man, all progress, all individual differences of capacity and power of assimilation would be impossible under the continuance of the same environment and parentage. But man does progress, he does show various degrees of enlightenment and of physical power under exactly the same conditions. In the same forests where his ancestors herded as savages or chattered in the branches as apes, if you will, he has built cities, laid out vast parks, and stretched wires to carry his thought from shore to shore. We should be much nearer the truth in saying that man is the creator and not the creature of his environment. The truth is that he is both influenced by it and influences



it, and the measure of the preponderance of either influence is determined by his intellect. It is therefore unpardonable stupidity in a man to declare himself the helpless creature of social environment.

Darwin himself, in later years, saw the error into which he had fallen in attributing too much influence to climatic conditions, and humorously said of it: "It has taken me many years to disabuse my mind of the too great importance of climate—its important influence being so conspicuous, while that of struggle between creature and creature is so hidden—that I am inclined to swear at the North Pole, and, as Sydney Smith said, to speak disrespectfully of the Equator."

It will take us, also, many years to escape the fascination of so easy an explanation of differences between man and man, as that which we sum up in the word "environment." Because a moth on the bark of a tree finds its security in its bark-colored wings, because the lizard in the sand has a yellowish hue, and the polar bear is white, we straightway conclude that man, too, finds the color of his fate and his character in the hues of his surroundings; and we formulate a scientific Calvinism of predestination as hard and tight as the dogmas of its religious prototype. We see that the larva of a working bee, if its cell is enlarged and it is fed in a peculiar way, develops into

a queen bee, and forming an analogy to fit human experience, we make a law of a figure of speech, and seriously think that if we enlarge our houses and feed better, we shall develop a royal type of humanity. But it is intelligence, not function, that makes the superiority of man, and human intelligence is not the play of so simple a mechanism. Its laws elude us; when we think we have grasped them, nature mocks us with their violation, and we must either give them up, or patch up the rags of them as best we can.

The influence of environment, when it is not markedly different enough to produce racial types, is purely external, and the essential elements of character remain the same. A man's accent may be that of his parish, his table manners may not pass muster at Paris or London, his trousers may fit his legs closely in one province, and bag in another, but the deep underlying ego that makes the man what he really is, was born with him, and Burns at the plow tail is as much of a poet as Byron in the House of Lords. The vast majority of our geniuses and men and women of note came from the huts and the cottages, not from the mansions and palaces. It would seem as if Nature delighted to show how she scorns all artificial coddling when she proposes to send a great man into the world. She makes no bed of roses, she smooths no paths for him, she does not feed him on

ambrosia and nectar, she does not fill his ears with applause. On the contrary, not luxury and ease, but toil and care, are waiting for him, and the poor man's meager fare, and the chill isolation which a lofty ideal always creates for itself. Yet, our ingenious socialists propose to substitute a new cushioned method for Nature's austere one. They will hatch geniuses by the thousand in their new social incubator. They think that geniuses, inventors, and artists can be made to order out of any sort of human material; but the brain of man is not analogous to the liver of a Strasburg goose, and cannot be enlarged by any artificial process of cramming. All that education, training, fortunate environment can do, is to develop it favorably to its utmost possibility. It cannot be remade into something different and of superior quality, any more than by careful cultivation of the wild rose we can have anything more than the most beautiful rose possible. By no process of culture, by no change of environment, can it be transformed into a lily. No — we can hatch out chickens in an incubator, but we must leave the laying of the eggs to the hen.

Truly, therefore, history has no more profitable lesson to teach the restless, discontented spirit of our age than the lesson of the natural inequality of men, and their consequent relations to each other, along with that other great truth, that the story of civiliza-



tion is the story of a struggle towards the light, often relentless and cruel, but never advanced through sloth and ease. Therefore we can never hope to rid ourselves of the pain and weariness of toil, and must learn to face pain with courage and work with love. The laborer's real recompense for his toil is the pride and joy he feels in its results. I shall never forget how the first conception of that joy came to me some years ago in Venice. I had started out to find St. Mark's Square, the first evening of my arrival, and not knowing the way, I inquired of a workman who was going home with his dinner pail in his hand. He offered to accompany me, saying that his way led through the square. As we were passing through one of the narrow streets, he stopped suddenly and said, with a fine accent of pride in his voice and a sudden light in his face, as he sounded his foot on the pavement: "There's a bit of my work. I helped lay that pavement." And I knew he was right to feel proud that by his labor we could walk dry-shod over what had once been a slimy water way.

Passing through the square, the next day, I heard what I thought to be a chant of monks from St. Mark's, but on approaching the inclosed space where the new bell tower was going up, I recognized that it came from the workmen inside. How richly the deep, sonorous voices rang out on the air! A genuine song

of labor, a glorious chant rising and falling in exquisite cadence, as if work were a joy supreme, and every brick and stone of the rising campanile must swing itself to position in a burst of music! Such music is far more touching than any chant of idle monks in their dim, cool cloisters, forever secure from the heat and fret and toil of the world. Encouraging and helpful, too, as well as touching, was this song of labor in these days when the primal curse that rests upon the fields that he must till is oftener on his lips than the song of joy and thankfulness that he *can* work; that it *is* given to him to drain poisonous marshes and cover them with rippling fields of grain; to fell forests and build cities; to subdue the ocean and make of its trackless waters the highway of the nations; to make the rough stones of the quarry obey his fancy, and mount in colossal wall, or airy turret and spire, or unfold in lovely blossom and lace-like tracery, or rise re-created in his own image with a beauty that gladdens the ages. Has he not reason to be glad in his work and proud of it? Shall he not sing at his labor? Is it better to encourage that song, or to silence it, or change it into lament and curses, by preaching revolt and discontent, and turning the eyes toward a mirage of impossible bliss?

## CHAPTER V

### ETHICAL TEACHING

WITH the ethical question left out, public school education is an air plant that may sometimes take the brilliant form of an orchid, but will never produce a fruit-bearing tree; and humanity is in greater need of fruits than orchids.

It is daily asserted that our age is suffering from the collapse of religious faith, and it is assumed that morality is necessarily bound up with the acceptance of a faith which assigns a reason for good behavior in the rewards or punishments of a future life.

Perhaps no more immoral or dangerous idea than this of the necessary interdependence of religion and morality could be promulgated; although it is true that a morality based upon a belief in a scheme of future rewards and punishment must give way with a loss of this belief. But the fact only proves the inferiority and worthlessness of a morality based upon such a belief, instead of resting upon the invincible principle of a real love of right for itself alone. Add to this moral bewilderment that nostalgia of the soul which has lost its ideal, its meaning of life—which



to smile and let the bees come to your lips? And you, Byron, had not you near you at Ravenna under the orange groves of Italy, under your blue Venetian sky, near your dear Adriatic, had not you the woman whom you loved so well?

“O God! I who speak to you am nothing but a feeble child! Perhaps I have known evils which you have not suffered, and yet, I believe in hope,—and yet, I bless God!”

Perhaps our children will utter the same reproach to us in asking these solemn questions: Could not you have taught us that duty is nobler than pleasure? When science shut out heaven from the sky, and God out of the universe, could not you have taught us that it set no limit to the progress of intelligence nor wiped out the boundary line between right and wrong, but defined right in terms of progress in life, and light, and higher joy, and evil in terms of retrogression and ruin? Did you teach us that to ask for the meaning of life in terms of length and not breadth is to be ignoble, and that breadth of life comes from the largest sympathy with all life? Could not you have taught us to respect work, independent of play, and fitted us to carry its burdens without weariness and disgust? Was it impossible to show us what is dignified and venerable in age, because the fear of it was in your own hearts, and you felt that you must apologize for your

years and travesty youth to make yourselves seem to be one of us? Did you fill us with the hatred of shams, with the horror of passing ourselves off for more than we were worth? Did you inspire us with the love of truth above all things, and with fearlessness in the presence of it? Did you teach us the beauty of self-control, of loyalty, of trustworthiness, sympathy, obedience to superiors, of courage in the presence of difficulty and danger? Did you show us how poor a thing it is to struggle for wealth and distinction at the cost of health, honor, intelligence, and freedom? Did you free us from superstition only to give us over to despair or indifference when confronted with great moral problems? Did you break our will, or weaken it, by reasoning us into believing that we had no will at all, but were the playthings of destiny?

It would be difficult to give a satisfactory answer to these questions, and that is why there is at present so general an awakening of the professional conscience on the subject of ethics. And there has been a very general hurrying and scurrying to the breach with all sorts of weapons of defense, with the result that we have lecture-ethics, playground ethics, experimental ethics, stereopticon-views ethics, anatomical ethics, and in the midst of it all have forgotten the really essential fact so admirably summed up in

the telling sentence which Richter quotes in *Levana* from a Chinese author: "Not the cry, but the rising of a wild duck impels the flock to follow him in upward flight."

The leaven of the larger life must be in us, before we can start it to fermenting in the young entrusted to our care. "The virtue of the prince," says Confucius, "is like unto wind, that of the people like unto grass; for it is the nature of grass to bend when the wind blows upon it."

When I look back to the influence of the valiant woman to whose memory these pages are written, I see in her this prince-like power of inspiration. It was an influence of *character* and not of set lessons which she wielded. She *was* what she would have us be. She inspired us with an intense respect which never lessened even when it overflowed into deep love. It was due, I think, to an admirable reticence in her which had nothing severe or repellent in it, and yet held us in check. We felt her deep, sincere affection, although she never revealed it in the cheap shop-girl epithet, "*dear*," applied indiscriminately to everybody. Children need love, but they need it steeled with firmness. There is a wholesome, vigorous, bracing love, not afraid to be harsh at times, if necessary, based first of all upon the wish to ennoble and bless the object loved. Then there is a



weak, sloppy, "my deary," sugary sort of affection, not really deserving the name of love, which makes all sorts of concessions to weakness, and it is based upon vanity and sloth of mind, the desire to please and to be pleasing without effort. Nothing is more pernicious than an affection of this kind. It is the love of weak, characterless mothers and weak, characterless teachers. It is so sweet that it is sticky, and woe to the child that it smears! He grows cruel and insolent under it, arrogantly confident, disdainfully ungrateful, contemptuous of the weakness that pets him.

Kraft-Ebing declares that bad education, laying the foundation for hysteria, hypochondria, or drunkenness, may be the result first of "too harsh treatment of an extremely impressionable child's nature; or secondly, of a too indulgent education that denies nothing, and excuses all unbridled passions, obstinacy, and want of self-control. Nothing strong and energetic ever comes from mother's pets. Social life demands self-control, subordination to the majority, strength of opposition to the storms of life, and resignation. Where these are wanting, bitterness and pain are not spared; thirdly, the too early awakening of the intellectual power at the expense of the feelings and the soundness of the body."

In that wise book full of helpful suggestions to

teachers, *Il romanzo d'un maestro*, Edmondo de Amicis makes an experienced teacher say to a young schoolmaster who has failed in discipline:

“I know the adoration of childhood that you have, and I esteem it as a treasure of force in a teacher; but the master must hide it. By an instinctive love of domination, the child imagines for himself a foundation of right in every concession that is made to him, and he uses it as a pretext for rebellion. He must not be governed by threats and chastisement, nor by exhortations, but by commands; and under all this, he must feel the affection that moderates, compensates, consoles, but cautiously, at opportune moments, showing like a ray of light in the midst of clouds. The maxim of a certain general is good for children as it is for soldiers: ‘Never threaten, never compromise.’

“Believe me, I commenced like you, and I had to change. I have doubted myself. There is concealed in me a man who loves children, who suffers when they suffer, and is charmed with their grace and their naïveté, who caresses them in his thoughts and pardons them quickly. But there is another I, — a man, external only, who interposes himself between the children and the real man, and is a very different sort of man; — severe, sparing of praise,

harsh sometimes, but always just. Try to do the same thing."

I do not think our teacher's attitude to us was adopted in this deliberate way. I think her reticence was natural. It is my experience that the most exquisite natures are apt to conceal their tenderness through an instinct of self-preservation, and that their apparent equilibrium is a mask which they wear to prevent their being too frequently wounded. On the other hand, great suavity and a fluent expression of emotion is a natural accompaniment of coldness and hypocrisy. The child's instinct very rarely leads him astray in this matter, and his deepest love and respect flow towards the hidden sources of tenderness. We felt our teacher's perfect justness, when we heard her praise and blame fall where they were deserved. She never nagged us; she never argued with us. She gave her commands without any unnecessary assumption of authority, and never excused the disobedience of them. She had a singular flexibility that made her incapable of resentment or sulkiness. It seemed as if every day were a new beginning, with the faults and follies of the day preceding canceled from her memory. Her love of truth was very remarkable, and she often illustrated its beauty and impressiveness with a belief that it



is the basis of honesty and trustworthiness,—the backbone of character. She gave us an example of the rare courage that dares to be true to itself in little as well as in great things. She showed it to us in her contempt of the caprices of fashion, as well as her indifference to mere forms of opinion with no kernel in them. She never talked for mere effect. When she spoke, she had something to say; therefore she held our attention. She was generous in the noblest way; she gave herself and her time to us, out of school as well as in the class room. No one left her, even after a short conversation, without feeling in some way strengthened and exhilarated. And the reason of it was that she had high intellectual vigor combined with the most perfect common sense. Outside of genius, I believe this combination to be rare, and it is not always found in genius. Learning has little part in this vigor. An ass drawing a cart-load of books after him is no less an ass because the cart is loaded with books instead of gravel. It is nature that decrees that one man shall be superior to another, and nature had decreed that her intellect should neither be clogged by pedantry nor vitiated by a romantic or sentimental twist. For this reason she was a perfect antidote to the cheap sentimentality that despises to-day because it is not to-morrow, and the place where it lives because it

is not some other place, and the reality it touches because it is not woven of the cobwebs and rainbows of dreams. Her sane, clear outlook on life made her an incomparable guide to the young, and set a high ethical standard before them whose principles were: honor and obedience where honor and obedience are due, truth, justice, honesty, sympathy, self-respect, self-control, and love of work. These ethical principles are the inheritance of the most advanced races of humanity, and are not necessarily bound up with any particular religious faith; and the assertion that they are, is one of those discouraging claims of a too zealous faith, that require repeated denial. Herbert Spencer felt this when he wrote his *Data of Ethics*, and anticipated the criticism of those who "far from rejoicing that ethical principles otherwise derived by them, coincide with ethical principles scientifically derived, are offended by the coincidence"; and the offense continues to show itself in the feeling of contempt with which the religious man regards the morals of his philosophical neighbor, although consistent with his own, except that they are unsustained by any hope of immortality.

"These individuals are parasites," writes the French moralist, Legendre. "In the pagan world, parasites ate from the table of the nobles. In the

the command, "What you would not wish done to yourself, do not unto others," was just as much the summary of a high morality when it fell from the lips of Confucius, as when it was uttered in a positive form by Christ. It is a curious and narrow prejudice to look on it otherwise, and a singular arrogance that says of the gift of life, that it is a mockery, a jest, to be wasted and spilled as we choose, if it be not endless; and that morality is an idle word without a hell to enforce it or a heaven to reward it. Morality is life at its best and its highest. It is the health of the soul. It is the noblest expression of the instinct of self-preservation; and, as such, becomes the inheritance of the race, so that its dictates are felt as an infallible conscience, a categorical imperative, the reason of which is no more to be questioned than the instinct which holds us to life. It takes on, then, its beautiful finished form of right for the sake of right. It asks no reward; it is its own reward. Indeed, if the question of reward arises, it is felt as a reproach, a stain on the purity of the motive which alone is esteem for the law. Hence arise among all races those exquisite dicta of morality which express the necessity of it, not because a reward or punishment is implied in it, but because it is an end in itself; because in the language of a Hindoo sage, "the existence of living beings is as



drunkard the expediency of drunkenness to-day. To teach that there is no device in the grave may make the deviceless person more contented in his dullness; but it will make the deviser only more earnest in devising; nor is human conduct likely in every case to be purer under the conviction that all its evil may in a moment be pardoned, and all its wrongdoing in a moment redeemed; and that the sigh of repentance, which purges the guilt of the past, will waft the soul into a felicity which forgets its pain,—than it may be under the sterner and to many not unwise minds more probable apprehension that ‘what a man soweth, that shall he also reap,’—or others reap when he, the living seed of pestilence, walketh no more in darkness, but lies down therein.”

Ruskin is right. A belief in the transitoriness of life by no means implies to any really brave and thoughtful man the conviction that it is not worth having. He knows that if he have an eternity before him, he can enjoy no more of it than what is bounded by the present, and his eager curiosity, his growing intelligence, supply him with so many objects of interest and pleasure, his widening sympathies so broaden his feeling of life by allying him to all forms of it, that it never occurs to him to question its meaning apart from itself. It is itself an end, a meaning, and he rejoices in it as such, with

the great Goethe to whom "*Das Zweck des Lebens ist das Leben selbst.*" But when the satiety of sensual pleasures has dulled the capacity for intellectual joy, and the thrill of health is gone, the useless question, *What is the meaning of life?* intrudes into the sick and weary heart and will not be silenced while it feebly beats. If the character be strong, and the intellect have a powerful bias toward the ideal, the question is put to rest by an ascetic faith. If the character be weak through excess of vanity, the question is silenced by unbridled sensuality. The one seeks his rest in the solitude of the mountain summits and quenches his thirst in their eternal snows. The other seeks it among swine, and slakes his thirst with their swill and wallows in their mire. Our century has given us two notable examples of these two types of mind in Leo Tolstoï and Oscar Wilde,—in the one, the beast in man wholly trampled under foot and dead; in the other, the beast triumphant.

In *De Profundis*, the most solemn warning ever uttered to an erring century, Oscar Wilde confesses, after summing up the advantages of his position,—genius, wealth, social station, the ear of the public: "Then came the turning point. I allowed myself to become enslaved by senseless sensuality and ease. I amused myself by being a *flaneur*, a dandy, and a

leader of fashion. I wasted my genius and found a strange pleasure in squandering the gift of eternal youth. I had become tired of dwelling on the heights, and descended by my own will into the depths. I eagerly sought new sensations and strange experiences. In the realm of thought, I delighted in being paradoxical; in the realm of passion, I became attracted by that which is perverse. Desire became a disease, a frenzy, or both. I had no regard for the lives of others. I satisfied my desires whenever it suited me, and passed on. I forgot that every act, even the most insignificant act of daily life, in some degree makes or unmakes the character; that every occurrence which transpires in the seclusion of the chamber will some day be proclaimed from the house-tops. I lost control over myself. I was no longer at the helm, and knew it not. I had become a slave to pleasure, . . . and hideous degradation was the result. One thing, only, is left to me, complete humility.

. . . . .

“I hope that I may some day be able to say honestly and sincerely that my life had two turning points,—the first, when my father sent me to Oxford; the second, when society sent me to jail. I do not mean to say that this was the best thing that could have happened to me. I would rather put the



matter this way, and have it understood by others, that I was such a typical child of the times, that in my perversity I turned that which was good in my life to evil, and that which was evil to good.

. . . . .

"Suffering and all its lessons — that is my new world. My former life was devoted to pleasure alone. To pain and care I gave a wide berth: they were not to my taste. I made it a habit not to pay the slightest attention to them, to look upon them as infirmities. They had no place in the economy of my life, no place in my system of philosophy.

. . . . .

"I now realize that suffering is the noblest emotion of which man is capable,—is, as it were, the type and touchstone of the highest art. . . . Sorrow or suffering is beyond comparison perfect truth."

In calling himself "a typical child of the times," Oscar Wilde was right in so far as he represents the reaction against the acceptance of pain as a necessary element of human discipline, and against the solemn and restraining sentiment of responsibility which make the basis of Christian ethics. He represents, also, the increasing feebleness of will in modern man, which makes him indulgent, as Bourget observes, "towards the errors and faults of weakness,

excusing them as fatalities of impulse, of heredity, of temperament, excuses that would have been unintelligible to our forefathers." We give to the unvarying sequence of cause and effect the name of law, and we discover that it reigns everywhere, in the nature of man, as well as in the living and inert phenomena surrounding him. Consequently around this question whether the will of man is free or not, there has always been and always will be dissenting opinions, some holding it to be entirely free, others thinking it entirely determined. The truth here, as elsewhere, seems to lie between the two extremes. Man is not wholly the product of his environment, or as George Eliot makes Mr. Lammeter say, "Breed is more than pasture." Nor is he entirely the creature of heredity. With every new being, there comes a new face into the world, though modeled on the old familiar type,—there comes also a new intellect with characteristics of its own. Man is free and *not* free, like a calf that is tethered to a stake. The calf is free the length of his rope, and man, too, is free the length of *his* rope — and the rope is not of the same length for every man. There are strong wills and weak wills; but were all wills equally determined, the expression of any difference in them would be nonsense, for the difference would not exist. Man's will seems to be completely determined only when he

dreams, and his waking hours would mirror the same confusion and fatality, were the mind not controlled by the will. In short, if determinism means fatalism in the absolutely inflexible way that Calvinism does, it is contradicted by the uniform experience of the normal mind. "The worth of a man consists not in what he knows, but in how he wills," says Herbert. The mind does not willingly resign the consciousness of responsibility, and when it does we have the word *insane* to fit the case. On the other hand, if a certain degree of determinism did not direct the will, education, training, experience, environment, or whatever we call higher influences would be worse than useless. There must consequently be a misapplication of certain scientific deductions, when the mind is reduced to a mere mechanism by them, and the truth must lie somewhere between the extremes of materialism and idealism. Therefore, it is safe to say that the doctrine of irresponsibility has come in with the half understanding and misapplication of scientific truths, and must go out again with a revival of common sense. If a man's ancestors and his environment are made the excuse for his crimes, we are as unable to help him as we are to straighten a crooked tree that has got its growth. But the really absurd part of the doctrine is, that after relieving a man of all responsibility with regard to his



own actions by shoving it back on his ancestors, we turn about when he is dead and make him responsible for his posterity. Better start the responsibility sooner and let it take care of his own life instead of shifting it on to him later when he is dead and gone. Besides, every decent man prefers to accept himself with all his faults and sins as a responsible creature, rather than attribute them to his father and mother. Such a doctrine leads directly to social anarchy and the increase of crime. Our much vaunted free country, where more money is spent on education than in any other, leads the world in the commission of crime by a very heavy per cent. A weak sentimentality, the spread of the belief that either social conditions or pathological conditions, and not a man's own bad heart, are responsible for crime, has much to do with this state of affairs. Again, we must say, it is the inside of the platter that needs scouring. It cannot be kept clean by simply brushing off the table all around it. Nor can it be kept clean by changing the definition of clean, and insisting that it is sweet and pure when it is foul with rottenness.

There is, at present, a widespread Rousseauish revival of sentimentality and of nature worship that threatens the revival of ancient phallic worship. As if we had not outgrown all that, just as we have outgrown our swaddling clothes and slaving bibs!

As if civilization does not necessarily imply an opposition to nature in many things, and does not mean to

"Move upward, working out the beast  
And let the ape and tiger die."

All this slimy sentimentality about a very simple and natural thing, around which a wise decency has heretofore thrown a becoming reticence, is the sure entrance on the downward path to the mire into which Oscar Wilde fell; and when a woman sets herself up as a priestess of this phallic worship, it is well to pause a moment and deliberately face this new malady of erotic eruption, because only evil can come from ignoring it and letting it spread still farther.

To do Ellen Key entire justice, she has no intention of opening the gates to the mire any more than Epicurus had any intentions of founding a philosophy of low, egotistic pleasure-seeking. The common mistake of a beautiful soul, and Ellen Key has a beautiful soul, is to believe generously in the entire beauty of all other souls. It is an exquisite illusion which brings great delight to the possessor; but like all other similar illusions it is founded upon an entire ignorance of human nature. Ellen Key sees all men and women through her own temperament; the keynote to her nature is motherhood. She

has the great, warm, forgiving, brooding, blind mother-heart; and because the love that fills her heart *is* blind, and not beautifully keen-sighted, she would lead the world into a foul and stagnant ditch, while proclaiming it the fountain of Paradise. Mrs. Carlyle used to say of Edward Irving, "Had he married me, there would have been no tongues," meaning that her own rare common sense would have kept his brilliant intellect sane. So we might say of Ellen Key: Had she ever married, or even, unmarried, could she have lived a few years in American boarding-houses, with an ordinary gift of observation, she would not now be the priestess of the phallic cult with the gushing illusions of a budding schoolgirl of fifteen. And it is a significant hint of the unquenchable youthfulness or rather childishness of the unobservant mind, that her poetical gush, due to entire ignorance of human nature, is so widely and eagerly received as the droppings of wisdom. Or, rather, is it not generally received because it flatters the weakness of humanity and is an opiate to the conscience? It is so much easier to drift with the wind of passion, and dream that it will float us to Schlaraffenland where, as Schopenhauer says, "everything grows of itself, and roasted pigeons fly around, and everybody finds his doxy at once and enjoys her without difficulty," than to seize hold of



the oars and with vigorous muscles row against the stream to shores that we know are safe.

Every thinking man or woman arrived at maturity who prefers truth to illusion, and is not afraid to receive it, even when it is painful and refuses to flatter him, knows what love is and its importance; knows, too, that the deceptive illusions concerning its sacred and permanent character are not borne out by experience, but that it is simply an imperious instinct which as a powerful lever of the emotions disturbs temporarily the judgment, thus often leading to hastily formed relations which become a lifelong source of irritation and misery, while similar relations entered into with cool foresight and a feeling of respect and comradeship are far more apt to end in quiet happiness. Literature and life are full of the wrecks of the so-called "divine passion." The most remarkable evidence of the capricious and blind character of love has been made public in our day in the history of the son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who renounced all his titles and dignities to marry a public singer. Three years of married life were more than sufficient to put an end to their romantic love, and the disillusioned nobleman applied for a divorce. As there were not sufficient grounds for it, a final separation for life was agreed upon, and the nobleman begged to be reconciled to his fam-

ily and to be restored to the privileges which he had once so willingly renounced all for love and the world well lost. Doubtless, long before he was willing to acknowledge his mistake, he had felt the keen misery of it, and knew that ardent love between the sexes is a temporary illusion, and that a marriage resulting from it has fewer chances of happiness than that which is based upon esteem and friendship. Such a statement is naturally revolting to youth, and especially to women who make a religion of love, because they are inclined by nature to faith and credulity. This characteristic, except in very rare cases, follows them even in their highest intellectual development, and they throw off one religion to accept another, changing their masters as they change their gowns.

Even so brilliant a woman as Ellen Key is no exception to this rule. She has freed herself from the Christian dogma. "Nothing is juster, from an evolutionary standpoint," she says, "than to treat Christianity as we do the pearl oyster; that is, throw away the larger, coarser part, and keep only the smaller and more valuable human personality of Christ." Nor is she readier to accept any of the philosophical systems as an explanation of the mysteries of life. She compares them to spider webs, the threads of which, spun out of the depths of consciousness, serve

foam — and the allusion to Rousseau as the St. John of this new religion is particularly unfortunate, but very natural, for Rousseau's nature was essentially feminine. The only manly thing about him was his marvelous gift of expression, a gift much more rarely accorded to women, and as seductive as the serpent in the Garden of Eden. He says of himself in a letter to Grimm in defense of his ingratitude towards Mme. D'Epinaÿ:

“Nobody knows how to put himself in my place, nobody is willing to see that I am a being apart who has not the character, the maxims, the resources of others, and who must not be judged by their rules.”

Granting this self-judgment to be correct, it would be a singular folly to make the maxims and sentiments of a “being apart” the guide and director of beings in general. But the truth is that Rousseau's temperament was only an exaggeration of that which is common to all supersensitive, weak, sentimental, neurotic men and women. This temperament is characterized by an irritable vanity; absolutely insatiable with regard to adulation, quick to take offense at every fancied slight, implacable and unforgiving when offended, circling incessantly about itself, poisoning the present while feeding the imagination with brilliant pictures of the future, never blessed where it is, but always to be blessed



where it is not, it multiplies its miseries and suffocates its joys.

No one better than Saint-Marc Girardin has shown the morbid and weak character of Rousseau's sensibility and how very closely it is related to sensuality. "Rousseau," he writes, "abandoned Mme. de Warens 'without leaving or scarcely feeling the least regret for a separation the very thought of which would formerly have given us the anguish of death.'"

"There are your heroes and heroines of sensibility! They think themselves born to live and die together; but let the least accident occur, an annoyance or an absence, and indifference and oblivion immediately follow; inevitable conclusion of affections which the soul very inappropriately attributes to herself, but which come from chance and the heat of youth."

Speaking of Rousseau's placing his children in a foundling asylum, Girardin remarks:

"There, again, you have one of the most characteristic traits of sensibility. It is incapable of recognizing duty, whenever duty appears in the form of an embarrassment or a sacrifice unaccompanied by a feeling of pleasure. . . . Put no trust in the morality of a heart that searches its duties in emotions, and does not believe that man is obliged to do his duty except when he is agreeably moved. . . .

In all ages, the great corrupters are those who represent good as evil, or evil as good: who say that property is theft, marriage is slavery, and adultery is liberty."

This quotation deserves to be deeply pondered over; and the more it is meditated upon, the more firmly will every sensible man and woman be convinced that the prurient curiosity aroused by the continual discussion of erotic subjects in public, to-day, bodes no good to our youth and the future welfare of society. When it can go so far as to move a serious suggestion in a national educational assembly, for the introduction in our public schools for classes in courtship, as it did recently, it is certainly time to cry halt. Hysterical phallic worship can hardly go farther, but it argues a singular license of public sentiment when it can go so far. In a letter to Mazzini, George Sand writes of an acquaintance:

"She is infatuated with herself. . . . Man and woman are everything to her, and the sex question in that acceptance of the term in which the thought of neither man nor woman ought to rest exclusively, effaces in her the idea of the human being who is always the same being, and who ought not to be perfected either as man or woman, but as a soul and as a child of God. From this preoccupation, there

arises in her a sort of hysterical condition which she does not realize, but which exposes her to being the dupe of the first rogue that comes along. I believe that her conduct is chaste, but her mind is not, and perhaps that is worse. I should prefer her having lovers and never talking about them, to her not having any and ceaselessly talking about them."

This is remarkably applicable to Ellen Key and her followers, and to all so-called "advanced thinkers" in the erotic line who smut innocence with hideous suspicions, and are for tearing all the buds open to look for worms. That exquisitely delicate and subtle French thinker, Joubert, has left us a beautiful essay entitled, *What is Modesty?* in which he compares it to a protective tissue or shelter which Nature gives to her incomplete creations to assure them that rest, solitude, and safety which precede their completion. It is in reality only a beautiful amplification of an old Hindoo saying: "Grains of rice shaken out of their husks will not ripen." "Do we need to speak of its necessity?" adds Joubert. "What the white of the egg, and that web in which they are contained, is to the young of birds; what the husk of the seed is to the plant in embryo; what the calyx is to the flower; what the sky is to the earth,—that is what modesty is to our virtues. Without this preserving shelter, they could not be



disclosed. Their sanctuary would be violated, the germ nakedly exposed, and the progeny lost.

“Let us apply this idea to ourselves. We all have modesty, but not an identical modesty. This immaterial veil is of various textures. It is given to all of us, but not with equal bounty, nor with equal favor. Some have a coarsely woven modesty, others have but a shred of it. Only those who bear within them the germ of all the perfections have perfect and entire modesty. We do not always keep it. It is like beauty: frightful accident may ravish it from us; and without effort it diminishes of itself and is effaced, when it becomes useless and its end is attained. In fact, modesty persists in us as long as there is in us some unknown particle that has not yet taken on its substance and all its solidity, and until our organs are capable of receiving and retaining eternal impressions. But when the soft seeds of our solid qualities have reached their full development, when our first affections, like milk which coagulates, have produced kindness in us, or our natural kindness has become unalterable; when the mind, nourished with chaste ideas, is developed and can retain that equilibrium which we call reason, or our reason is formed; when moral rectitude has insensibly acquired that indestructibility which we call character; in short, when the secret principle of any depravity can no

"O wasteful woman! she who may  
On her sweet self set her own price,  
Knowing he cannot choose but pay,  
How has she cheapened Paradise!  
How given for naught her priceless gift,  
How spoiled the bread and spilled the wine  
Which spent with due respective thrift  
Had made brutes men, and men divine!"

Modesty in dress, in speech, in action,—this it is our duty to teach; not harshly, but with persuasive and eloquent insistence. A style of dressing prevails among high-school girls which is the extreme of bad taste and impropriety. The painted faces, bare arms and necks, the gaudy jingling ornaments, the peculiar cut of the dress designed to show every movement and outline of the figure, betray too plainly that it is not enlightenment in the direction of sensual snares that is needed, but rather restraint, lessons in modest behavior, in quiet, sensible dressing, and in courtesy and thoughtfulness of others.

A very sensible Scotch woman once called upon me in Edinburgh, very richly dressed, and said to me, apologizing for the elegance of her dress: "I did not dress to call upon you, for I knew you would care to see me and not my dressmaker's work; but I had to go to an Intelligence Office this morning to look for a servant, and that class of people never look below the surface, but judge you always by

your clothes. Had I gone plainly dressed, I should have been rated as a woman for whom it would not be worth while to work, and I shouldn't have been able to get a girl."

How common among us is this servant eye, betraying the innate vulgarity of the soul! How wrong we are to let its judgments pass unchallenged, instead of teaching that simplicity of dress and manners is the chief ornament of youth! The high, shrill voices should be softened, the loud laughter checked, the bad taste corrected, the boldness reprobated. This is ethical teaching, for it is teaching the suppression of vanity, selfishness, and immodesty, and setting up in their places the ideals which represent their opposites. An education which does not issue in quiet, beautiful manners and real kindness of heart is wanting in more than half its value, but that the education of our public schools as often issues in boorishness as otherwise is a most serious reproach to it. The eyes are not turned away from self, but are directed inward. We are so afraid that our young people may not like being educated that we free them from as much restraint as possible, lest discipline and study should interfere with their having a good time, and thus cut them off entirely from the larger life which begins with forgetfulness of self



to widen into interest in others. Ruskin has given a capital picture of the result of this sort of training in *Fors Clavigera*:

"I had to go to Verona," he reports, "by the afternoon train. In the carriage with me were two American girls with their father and mother, people of the class which has lately made so much money suddenly, and does not know what to do with it; and these two girls about fifteen and eighteen had evidently been indulged in everything (since they had had the means) which western civilization could imagine. And here they were, two specimens of the utmost which the money and invention of the nineteenth century could produce in maidenhood,—children of its most progressive race, enjoying the full advantage of political liberty, of enlightened philosophical education, of cheap pilfered literature, and of luxury at any cost. Whatever money, machinery, or freedom of thought could do for these two children had been done. No superstition had deceived, no restraint degraded them: types they could not but be, of maidenly wisdom and felicity as conceived by the forwardest intellects of our time.

"And they were traveling through a district which, if any in the world, should touch the hearts and delight the eyes of young girls. Between Venice and Verona! Portia's villa perhaps in sight upon the

Brenta,—Juliet's tomb to be visited in the evening,—blue against the southern sky, the hills of Petrarch's home. Exquisite midsummer sunshine, with low rays, glanced through the vine-leaves; all the Alps were clear, from the lake of Garda to Cadore, and to farthest Tyrol. What a princess's chamber, this, if these are princesses, and what dreams might they not dream, therein!

“But the two American girls were neither princesses, nor seers, nor dreamers. By infinite self-indulgence, they had reduced themselves simply to two pieces of white putty that could feel pain. The flies and dust stuck to them as to clay, and they perceived between Venice and Verona nothing but the flies and the dust. They pulled down the blinds the moment they entered the carriage, and they sprawled and writhed and tossed among the cushions of it in vain contest, during the whole fifty miles, with every miserable sensation of bodily affliction that could make time intolerable. They were dressed in thin white frocks, coming vaguely open at the backs as they stretched or wriggled; they had French novels, lemons, and lumps of sugar, to beguile their state with; the novels hanging together by the ends of string that once had stitched them, or adhering at the corners in densely bruised dog's-ears, out of which the girls, wetting their fingers occasionally, ex-

tricated a gluey leaf. From time to time they cut a lemon open, ground a lump of sugar backwards and forwards over it till every fiber was in a treacly pulp; then sucked the pulp, and gnawed the white skin into leathery strings, for the sake of its bitter. Only one sentence was exchanged in the fifty miles, on the subject of things outside the carriage (the Alps being once visible from a station where they had drawn up the blinds).

“‘Don’t those snow-caps make you cool?’

“‘No, I wish they did.’

“And so they went their way, with sealed eyes and tormented limbs, their numbered miles of pain.”

Have we any part in this hopeless sealing of the eyes of the young when we encourage their self-indulgence in a thousand ways, requiring neither a show of respect nor prompt, unquestioning obedience from them, eager to plan new amusements, new entertainments for them, rather than to prepare them to find their entertainment in themselves? The severe training of our fathers was far superior to this, for, at least, it produced self-control and independence; and it is high time that we should begin to realize that our public schools cannot successfully combine the complete training of an educational institute and the attractiveness of a moving picture show or variety theater. We cannot play at work



and do the highest work. Our high schools and colleges are overrun with young people who go there, not because they are at all solicitous about getting an education, or can take it if they would, but because they are dull at home and want amusement. It is not necessary that everybody should be educated, because not everybody can be: "Rotten wood cannot be carved, walls made of dirt and mud cannot be plastered;" but it *is* necessary that every one who can profit by educational advantages and really wants them, should have them under the very best conditions obtainable, undiluted with weak concessions to incompetency, love of idleness, and love of amusement. Our mission as educators is not to encourage mediocrity, but to assure to ability the training it needs for its highest development. It is our duty, also, to teach the beauty of truth, honesty, self-control, kindness, cheerfulness, duty, and the privilege of work.

The widespread Boy Scout movement is a step in the right direction most urgently needed at present, for it supplies the ethical discipline so frequently wanting in our educational training; and a careful study of the manual which is put into the hands of the young scouts would furnish many solicitous parents and teachers with useful hints as to what ought to be done for their own young charges. For

mere facts are not the vitalizing part of an education; it is the thrill that accompanies the recognition of the beauty of an ethical ideal that frees the soul from self, and gives it the conditions of noble growth.

It is a mistake to suppose that an æsthetic training is essentially a moral training, and that the love of beauty in art or literature can take the place of the deeper, austerer love of duty for its own sake, as an ethical guide. The terrible example of the author of *De Profundis* should burn that lesson ineradicably into the memory of his century. It is a mistake to believe that duty can be sugar-coated like a pill, or ethics taught in the guise of amusement. The great trouble with all modern ethical teaching is that it strives to cover its real austerity with a masquerade costume instead of awakening a devotion to its very seriousness. The churches are not willing any longer to be quiet sanctuaries for the soul, refreshing oases of peaceful meditation in the strife and bustle of the world. They are intent upon annexing the world and what seems to them its most innocent pleasures. A California clergyman who found that he could not fill his church by preaching from Biblical texts, hit upon giving a series of lectures on out-of-door sports, and appeared one morning in the pulpit with a shotgun and a game-bag in his hand. He drew a crowd; the next Sunday,

he brought a tennis racket and ball; and then boxing gloves, and the crowd grew larger. He was elated; but his mistake lay in supposing that men and women are essentially any better off in one place than in another, if they are occupied with the same thoughts and the same pleasures. Gambling on the steps of a church is no more respectable than gambling in the saloon across the way; and tennis and hunting out in the fresh air are much better than tennis and hunting in the pulpit. Spectacular ethics, dramatic readings from Job, never rise above the spectacle nor the boards of a theater. Bodenstein says finely:

“Der Staub wie hoch der Wind ihn auch erhebt, bleibt doch  
gemein:  
Der Edelstein den man in Staub begräbt, bleibt Edelstein.”

(The dust, no matter how high the wind may whirl it, is common still,  
The diamond, though buried in the dust, remains a diamond.)

Professional reformers are apt in private to need reforming themselves. The rose does not say a word about being beautiful. It just *is* beautiful and smells sweet. The sun does not say: How fine it is to be brilliant! It simply shines, and warms the earth. So the life within us should radiate silently and pour forth its fragrance. There is something very touching and very helpful in Pestalozzi's ac-



count of his experience with eighty children, many of whom on their arrival, he tells us, were very degenerated specimens of humanity, covered with vermin, suffering from chronic skin diseases, degraded by misfortune and suffering, and wholly without affection. But months of patient training revealed that he had touched the latent springs of higher growth in them. How? By set lectures? No. "I gave my children very few explanations. I taught them neither morality nor religion. But sometimes, when they were perfectly quiet, I used to say to them: 'Do you not think that you are better and more reasonable when you are like this, than when you are making a noise?' When they clung round my neck and called me their father, I used to say: 'My children, would it be right to deceive your father? After kissing me like this, would you like to do anything behind my back to vex me?' When our talk turned on the misery of the country, and they were feeling glad at the thought of their own happier lot, I would say: 'How good God is to have given man a compassionate heart.'"

In short, Pestalozzi took care to see that his soil was ready for the seed before he dropped it into the ground. When the children were obstinate and churlish, he did not attempt to reason with them, knowing very well how useless that would be; he

simply punished them, and there was an end of the matter.

Another great mistake that we make in our consideration of the question of ethics is to suppose that knowledge is always the great moral regenerator, and that by popular education, by enlightenment in all directions, we shall finally be able to shut the doors of our prisons and our almshouses. This error persists singularly, in spite of all experience to the contrary, and in spite of the clear and convincing way in which many great thinkers have exposed it. No one has done so better than Herbert Spencer.

"To say that men are ruled by reason," he asserts, "is as irrational as to say that men are ruled by their eyes. Reason is an eye—the eye through which the desires see their way to gratification. And educating it only makes it a better eye, gives it a vision more accurate and more comprehensive, does not at all alter the desires subserved by it. However far-seeing you make it, the passions will still determine the directions in which it shall be turned—the objects on which it shall dwell. Just those ends which the instincts or sentiments propose, will the intellect be employed to accomplish: culture of it having done nothing but increase the ability to accomplish them. . . . Did much knowledge and piercing intelligence suffice to make men good, then

Bacon should have been honest and Napoleon should have been just. Wherever the character is defective, intellect, no matter how high, fails to regulate rightly, because predominant desires falsify its estimate. Nay, even a distinct foresight of evil consequences will not restrain, when strong passions are at work. How else does it happen that men will get drunk, though they *know* drunkenness will entail on them suffering and disgrace and (as with the poor) even starvation? How else is it that medical students who know the diseases brought on by dissolute living better than other young men, are just as reckless and even more reckless? . . . Whatever moral benefit can be effected by education must be effected by an education which is emotional rather than perceptive. If, in place of making a child understand that this thing is right and the other wrong, you make it *feel* that they are so — if you make virtue *loved* and vice *loathed*, if you arouse a noble desire, and make torpid an inferior one — if you bring into life a previously dormant *sentiment* — if you cause a sympathetic impulse to get the better of one that is selfish — if, in short, you produce a state of mind to which proper behavior is natural, spontaneous, instinctive, you do some good. But no drilling in catechisms, no teaching of moral codes, can effect this. Only by repeatedly awaken-



ing the appropriate *emotions* can character be changed. New ideas received by the intellect meeting no response from within — having no roots there — are quite inoperative upon conduct, and are quickly forgotten upon entering into life."

This truth falling from the lips of an English philosopher, is eloquently repeated by an Italian man of letters, Francesco de Sanctis, in an address entitled *Learning and Life*; and as it seems to me a truth that needs repetition, I shall not hesitate to give some space to his rendering of it. We see farther when we mingle the light of other men's thoughts with our own.

"Is to know really to do?" asks De Sanctis. "Is knowledge the same thing as life? Is it the whole of life? Is it able to arrest the course of corruption and dissolution, renew the blood, transform the character? . . . Learning increases at the expense of life. The greater its contribution to thought, the more it takes away from action. We know life when it is leaving us; our comprehension of it comes when its power is waning. Faith dies; philosophy is born. Art is setting and criticism dawns. History is finished, and the historian appears. Morals grow corrupt, and moralists come. The state falls into ruin, and statecraft begins. The gods go, and Socrates accompanies them with his irony. The arts

vanish, and Aristotle makes an inventory of them; the republic declines, and Plato constructs an ideal republic; public life grows corrupt, and great orators arise; the eloquence of speech succeeds the eloquence of action. Livy narrates the story of a grandeur that was, with a prelude that might almost be called a funereal eulogy; and there is something funereal breathing from the profound and melancholy note of the last historians, Thucydides and Tacitus. Life is dissolute, and Seneca gives point to moral epigrams. Life is dead, and Plutarch strays among the tombs and collects the memorials of illustrious men.

"Therefore, is learning, the latest fount of life, able to re-create the tree of life? . . . Learning could illustrate, but it could not regenerate Greek and Roman life. It was powerless, yet it believed that it had power and this faith was its strength. The truth for which it searched would have seemed unworthy of esteem, if it had not had faith that this truth could be transfused into life. Plato saw in learning an ethical instrument and aim in the education of youth and in the prosperity of the state, and because art appeared to him corrupting, he abandoned it. Aristotle also considered ethics as the supreme end of learning, and pardoned the arts, because there was in them an ethical end, the purification of the passions. Socrates thought that by

controlling the young, he would be able to overthrow the sophists and restore national life. Plato goes to Syracuse, called there to regenerate that people, and his learning cannot for a moment arrest the course of history. The more flexible life becomes, the more rigid learning grows. They grow more and more apart in their path, without any reciprocal action. Contrasting with the vast corruption of the empire, rise the austere stoics. Stoicism is able to attract individuals to itself, but it is not able to form or reform any society; therefore it was the science of despair, a consecration in the presence of social dissolution, a *sauve qui peut*, wisdom safely retired within itself, impassive to the vicissitudes of the external world,—the deserter from society. Learning, working upon a world already corrupt, where liberty, having become license, had produced despotism, and where various races were unified by conquest, had the effect of diminishing or even obliterating local differences and local energies. It was good for systematizing and organizing that vast *ensemble* and introducing order and fixed laws which, even to-day, are documents of ancient grandeur. But a new spirit could not breathe life into that learned mechanism, nor restore moral and organic forces. It worked on the summit already ruined and crumbling away, and neglected the foundation, the



lowest social strata where the moral forces were still latent and entire, and where the followers of Christ were working more efficiently. One day, Learning ascended to the royal palace and seated herself by the side of Julian and held in her hand the entire power, and could not stop the dissolution of pagan life nor delay the formation of Christian life. Yet how proud that society was of its learning; with what contempt it treated the barbarians! and how scornfully would it have laughed had some ill-advised prophet told it that those very barbarians were predestined to be its heirs and its masters!

“Barbarism effaced, faith in knowledge is re-born, and miracles are expected of it. The ideal is Beatrice; faith is learning; life is a hell which Knowledge is, little by little, to transform into paradise; and paradise is universal monarchy, the reign of justice and peace, where Knowledge recognizes herself. The renaissance appeared, and Learning really believed that she was able to restore life. Learning was called Machiavelli, Campanella, Sarpi, and life was Cæsar Borgia, Leo X, and Philip II, and facts remained facts. The last ray of a glorious life reflected in art, produced a limpid and beautiful form, marked here and there with sadness and irony, as if it felt itself nothing but form, empty of content, empty of organism. That which was

called its golden age, flourishing with studies, arts, sciences, was its splendid age of sunset; it was the dream of Michelangelo and the sadness of Machiavelli.

“Later on, learning worked like a religion, because an apostolate was propagated among the people; it found its center of expansion in the French spirit and provoked a memorable movement, the oscillations of which continue to be felt to-day. A new society is born, a new life is formed; learning has its apostles, martyrs, legislators, its catechism; and it penetrates everywhere, into religion, morals, law, the arts, and into political, economical and administrative systems, and filters through all social institutions. But it was learning, and its effects were those of learning. It believed that renewing the idea and renewing life are one and the same thing, that knowing is the same as doing. It applied its logic to life as a fatal and inexorable consequence from given premises. It searched the premises in its principles, and in its formulas; not in the real and effective conditions of life. It treated the social organism as a machine, and treated men like the pawns on a chess-board that could be shoved about according to its game. It conceived life as a scientific ideal, and squinting at that ideal, weakened, while wishing to perfect them, all social or-

ganizations, religions, arts, society, the state and the family. When life, thus trampled on, reacted, it killed liberty in the name of liberty; it made men unnatural in the name of nature, and wishing by force to make them equals and brothers, it was science and became force; it was the summit, and neglected the base; and one fine day the base caved in and swallowed up the summit. And thus the reign of philosophy disappeared. Life avenged itself and in contempt called it ideology, and believed a little less in ideas and more in things. The more intense had been the faith in learning, the bitterer was the disillusionment, but it had wrested this hard truth from the experience,— *Learning is not Life.*

“In the presence of these examples I meditate seriously, and ask myself, What is the life of a people? A people lives when all its moral forces are intact. These forces are not produced unless they find outer stimuli. The more vigorous these stimuli, the greater their intensity and vivacity. Stimuli create a limit for their action; that is to say, an object which destroys the vagueness of their liberty, determines them, gives them a direction. These forces are productive, in proportion to the limitations of their liberty. When you take away a limit even from a strong man, he will create it for himself; and if he cannot do it legitimately, he will do it illegiti-



mately, because his strength needs a limit as the means needs an end. The priest is an example of this, and since sons are denied him, he is all the more tenaciously attached to his nephews. The weaker the sentiment of limitation in a people, the weaker and the nearer dissolution it is: on the contrary, life is more potent, the more the conscience is developed through limitations."

I am tempted to continue translating the entire address, because it is so fine a criticism of modern short-sightedness and blunders as to moral panaceas for the ills of society, in the form of breaking down all limitations of family and social ties, and removing all restrictions of duty. Let the philosopher be permitted in his study, under the roof, to look at humanity and human relations *sub specie eternitas*, and feel himself loosed from all obligations and limits because of their infinite pettiness. When at night, from his attic skylight, he looks up at the stars, let him feel himself, if he likes, the superhuman for whom only the absolute exists; but when he comes downstairs to breakfast in the morning, let him come without his philosophy, content to see in the relative and the limited the real tissue of human life, and ready to respect its limitations and relativity because he feels their necessity. We are not in need of more liberty, but of wise restrictions of it through a higher

## CHAPTER VI

### METHODS AND METHOD MAKERS

WERE I asked by what method the rare teacher of my childhood imparted her instruction, I should be at a loss to give it a name, so individual and so varied was it. It did not proceed from a conscious imitation of any of the great leaders of education, although she knew the trend of their thought. It was something living and flexible that grew out of the present needs of the children under her care, varying from day to day and from child to child. It was not method that she brought into the schoolroom, so much as an inundation of common sense. She had none of that effervescent enthusiasm which Voltaire describes as making the mind "like an oven in which everything is heated and nothing bakes." She was capable of indefatigable drudgery when drudgery was necessary, finding no short cuts to mental illumination by twisting the trite phrase, *killing the spirit by the letter*, into meaning the neglect of a substantial foundation for the sake of the roof and the skylights. She was shrewd enough to see that in that

case, her building would only topple down and the skylights be inevitably ruined. She built slowly that she might build well. She built with no unseasoned timber, lest it should warp and shrink. "First the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear"—perhaps this luminous saying better than anything else would describe her method.

We are trying now with all our might to get the full corn without the blade or the ear, and then complain because we cannot do it. She told me once that when a child, she had been very solicitous about some little chickens which she did not think were treated by the mother hen with enough attention. Her mother restored her confidence by saying, "My child, you can't teach an old hen how to take care of chickens, and you needn't try." She seemed to carry this confidence to the great brood-mother Nature and to distrust any forcing process that would overhasten development. "I give young people," she used to say, "a long time to find themselves and to develop." She knew that life itself, and not the schoolroom, was to be their great teacher, and that her especial business was to train them to profit by life's lessons—train them in love of accuracy, patience, the power of self-help, and the knowledge of the dignity of work. She dreaded



nothing so much as weakening them by vanity, frivolous amusement, or unnecessary assistance.

In reading Emile Faguet's monograph on *Mme. de Maintenon, Institutrice*, I was struck by the remarkable resemblance between our valiant woman's attitude toward the young and that of Mme. de Maintenon; and those admirable talks to the girls of St. Cyr have the same note as those she gave to us. Not method, then, but an intimate knowledge of life and its demands, a deep love of children and joy in teaching them, made her, as they made Mme. de Maintenon, a great teacher. Perhaps nothing else ever lies at the bottom of admirable teaching; and what we call method is originally only some marked individual way of expressing these characteristics. But the word has acquired in our day a quite special significance, and it is used as if the art of teaching could be reduced to fixed principles, instead of being as varied as human personality and as essentially inimitable. A manner of teaching which in one individual leads to excellent results may be absolutely futile and ridiculous in another; and for want of knowing this fact, education has suffered, and is destined to continue to suffer, from repeated experiments.

The most notable of these experiments have been due to the influence of three remarkable men,—Rous-

seau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel. All three of them were self-educated, and they necessarily brought to their ideas of education the freedom from conventionalities which had marked their own training. All three were men of thought, rather than of action, consequently their theory and practice were sometimes inconsistent; but as Tolstoï says: "Though I stagger drunkenly towards home, wandering often from the path, it does not alter the fact that the path leads towards home." They were men in whom the feminine characteristics, sensibility and sentiment, predominated over reason, therefore they broke down the rigidity and austerity of the old educational system and introduced into it the much-needed mother-element; and it was to mothers that they made their appeal. Unfortunately, it is this mother-element in their methods which has particularly survived, not in its original purity, but in a degenerated state of indulgence which more than anything else lies at the bottom of the deplorable condition to which we have come in our efforts to spread the light of knowledge. It might more truthfully be said, that instead of spreading the light, we are busy manufacturing all sorts of colored, smoked, and ground glass to obscure or make agreeable the light for weak eyes. But it is the bright white daylight of knowledge and the strong eyes, that the world

needs. It would be interesting and profitable to consider the aims and methods of these three great teachers in order to understand more clearly what we have rejected, retained, or distorted of their instructions.

It is well known that Rousseau's educational ideas at their best are but an amplification of those to be found in Plato's *Republic* (which he called the finest treatise on education ever written) and in Montaigne's *Essays*. It was Plato who first said that "no study pursued under compulsion remains rooted in the memory," and that "children must be trained to their studies in a playful manner, and without any air of constraint, with the further object of discerning more readily the natural bent of their respective characters." As for Montaigne, the method he pursued in his studies was that of every growing mind. When he could do so, he got his knowledge at first hand. He trusted his own senses. He traveled in other men's minds, but he made a home in his own. His knowledge was not something foreign and accidental, adhering to his mind as a burr to one's coat. It was a part of himself. It had grown up in him out of observation and experience. "I love knowledge as much as any one," he tells us; "but I hate an understanding which is only a memory, which can say nothing except by book. I hate it



worse than stupidity!" He likens a pedant with his unreasoning, memory-clogged brain to "those birds which go in quest of grain and carry it to their young in their beaks without tasting it. The pedant's knowledge lodges at the end of his tongue, and he only disgorges it. . . . I have seen in my time a hundred artisans, a hundred peasants, wiser and happier than the rectors of universities and whom I would rather be like. I have put forth all my efforts to form my life; my studies have taught me how to act rather than how to write. Great God! how I should hate to be recommended as a clever writer and yet as a man of naught, a fool or simpleton. Look on the ground at the poor people bending over their task, who neither know Aristotle nor Cato, nor an example nor precept of theirs, yet nature begets in them every day effects of constancy and patience purer and more austere than any of those we study so curiously in the schools. The man who is digging my garden, yonder, buried his father or his son this morning. They keep their bed only to die upon it."

Montaigne loved moderation and flexibility and declared that obstinacy and ardor of opinion are the surest proofs of foolishness, and that he has known in his time many a fool who earned a reputation for prudence and sagacity by a cold and taciturn

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mien. "Yet," he observes, "is there anything so resolute, disdainful, contemplative, grave, and serious as the ass?"

He thinks cheerfulness and serenity the supreme mark of wisdom, and likes better the laughter than the wailer at the calamities of life. His ideal of education is to do, and not to talk about doing. He complains that we are not really taught until life is past, that we teach the etymology and declension of virtue, and not how to love it. He accuses teachers of training the memory of a child and not his power to reason and reflect, saying:

"If my pupil's soul has not been given a higher impulse, if his judgment is not made sounder, I would rather he had passed his time playing tennis than in going to school; for his body, at least, would have been made suppler and stronger. Look at him, on his return from school after fifteen or sixteen years spent in study. He is good for nothing. His Latin and Greek have made him more foolish and presumptuous than he was on leaving home. He ought to have brought back a full mind; he has brought back an inflated one. Instead of enlarging his mind, he has only puffed it up. The aim of study is to grow better and wiser. Who asks his pupils what he thinks of such and such a Ciceronian passage? . . . Let a wise curiosity be awakened concern-

ing the nature of all things. Let him notice what is singular around him,—a building, a fountain, a man, an old battle-field, the passage of Cæsar or Charlemagne. Let him inquire as to the morals, the means, the alliances of this or that person; these are very agreeable things to learn and very useful to know. Let the teacher not so much impress the pupil's mind with the date of the ruin of Carthage as with the morals of Hannibal and Scipio; not so much *where* Marcellus died, as why he was recreant to his duty that he died there.

“Let him know the difference between knowing and not knowing, which ought to be the real aim of study. Let him learn what courage and temperance are, what can be said in comparing ambition and avarice, servitude and submission, license and liberty; by what signs we know true and solid happiness; how far death and pain and disgrace are to be feared; what motives impel us to action and are the spring of so many diverse emotions in us; for it seems to me that the first discourses which we owe him on the enlightenment of his understanding are those which regulate his morals and his senses; which teach him to know himself, and to know how to live and how to die. It is great folly to teach children the knowledge of the stars and the movements of the eighth sphere, before they know anything about their



own. . . . I would rather know myself than Cicero. If I am a good learner, my own experiences are sufficient to make me wise. Cæsar's life is no fuller of example to us than our own. . . .

"After we have taught the pupil what will make him wiser and better, then let us teach him logic, physics, geometry, and rhetoric. And above all, we must not forget that the whole man should be trained. It is not a soul, it is not a body, that is being trained, but a man, and we must not make two of him."

For permanent value in the science of education, these brief, pithy sentences are worth volumes of ordinary pedagogy, and when we think that we are making some advance in teaching, we are only carrying out their instruction. Montaigne thought it a great advantage to know Latin and Greek, but that the knowledge could be bought too dear. He opposed all unnecessary constraint and severity in the training of the young, yet by no means favored a weak indulgence. On the contrary, he believed that the authority of the governor of a child should be sovereign, that a child should not always be educated near his parents, because it relaxes and weakens the moral fibers to be surrounded by too much love and care, and that whoever wishes to make a good man will not spare him in his youth but must often shock the rules of tenderness. He required that the gov-

ernor of a child should be a man of sound judgment and good morals, open and yielding in his nature rather than a man of mere learning.

Montaigne set up for himself no lofty, unattainable ideals. He thought that the value of the soul consists, not in its high flights, but in its well-ordered regularity; that those who try to escape the limitations of human nature, make fools of themselves, instead of transforming themselves into angels. He declared that these transcendental humors frightened him, as did precipitous, inaccessible heights, and that nothing so much annoyed him in the life of Socrates as his demons and ecstasies; nothing in Plato seemed to him so human as that for which he was called divine; nothing in Alexander so mortal as those fancies about his immortal origin.

He believed that to enjoy loyally one's own human nature is the most absolute perfection to which we can attain; that no matter how high we may raise ourselves on stilts, we must still walk with our legs; and that we ought to be content with our conscience as that of a man, and not as that of an angel.

Thus shone the light of knowledge in a lonely tower in the valley of Dordogne in the sixteenth century, and it does not pale even in the fierce white light of this electric age. Thoughtful men and women everywhere, to-day, are repeating what Mon-

taigne said nearly four hundred years ago; and Rousseau repeated it in the eighteenth century. But because the fine balance of mind which gave wisdom and justice to Montaigne's thought was wanting in Rousseau, the unity of the white light was broken into beautiful prismatic coloring, essentially false, because it was never intended to be passed through such a prism. But the world is ungrateful to her sages and philosophers, and sits entranced at the feet of her artists and poets, learning her lessons by picture and song, giving an indestructible faith to what moves her feelings,—as if she had no rational mind capable of being moved at all. Rousseau knew how to clothe his ideas in the most seductive form; he knew how to move the feelings, being first moved himself, and if a work of art is a noble idea nobly expressed, *Emile* is a work of art and as such will continue to excite the admiration of its readers; but it will no longer carry with it the conviction that it produced when it appeared.

The eighteenth century was an age of skepticism: it had torn down old creeds without building up anything in their stead, and it had not really advanced in knowledge beyond the *Que sais-je?* of Montaigne. D'Holbach, who represents the extreme attitude of enlightened negation, declares emphatically that he would be just as much at a loss to tell



what the first stones, the first trees, the first lions, elephants, ants, or the first acorns came from, as to explain the origin of the human species; but that the human machine, wonderful as it is, did not seem to him beyond the powers of nature; and that he was very much farther from a conception of its origin, when told that a pure spirit, having neither eyes, feet, hands, head, lungs, nor mouth, nor breath, made man by taking a little mud and breathing on it.

Kant, who represents the most enlightened type of reason of the age, says, in the preface to his *General History and Theory of the Heavens*, that from a certain point of view, one might say, "Give me matter, and I will construct a world." After giving his reasons for this statement with regard to the inanimate world, he asks pertinently, "But can we boast of such advantages with regard to the smallest plant or insect? Are we able to say, 'Give me matter, and I will show you how a caterpillar originated'?" Are we not stopped at the very first step in this investigation, by ignorance of the true inner organization of the living object, and by its marvelous complexity? And it should not be taken amiss if I venture to assert that the form of all the heavenly bodies, the cause of their movements, in short the origin of the whole present state of the universe,

will be comprehended, before the origin of a single grass-blade or of a single worm will be plainly and completely known through mechanical principles."

D'Holbach's and Kant's attitude to the riddle of the universe summarizes the state of scientific knowledge in the eighteenth century. Whether we have really advanced much farther is an open question; for, *What is life?* is still the unanswered enigma; but at any rate we have advanced somewhat in hypotheses. Gustave Le Bon is teaching us, first, that "matter formerly supposed indestructible is vanishing by the continual disassociation of the atoms which compose it.

"2. The products of the dematerialization of matter constitute substances, intermediate by their properties between ponderable bodies and the imponderable ether: that is to say, between two worlds which, until now, science has entirely separated.

"3. That matter, formerly regarded as inert and unable to restore the energy with which it was furnished, is, on the contrary, a colossal reservoir of energy — inter-atomic energy — which it can spend without borrowing anything from outside.

"4. It is from inter-atomic energy, liberated during the disassociation of matter, that the majority of the forces of the universe result,— notably, electricity and solar heat.

"5. Force and matter are two different forms of one and the same thing. Matter represents a stable form of intra-atomic energy. Heat, light, electricity represent unstable forms of the same energy.

"6. In disassociating the atoms, that is, in dematerializing matter, we only change the stable form of energy, called matter, into these unstable forms, known as heat, light, electricity, etc. Matter, therefore, is continually transforming itself into energy.

"7. The law of evolution applicable to living beings, equally applies to simple bodies: The chemical species are no more invariable than living species.

"8. Energy is no more indestructible than the matter from which it emanates."

Darwin and his followers have established the theory of evolution, and although certain hypotheses, notably that of sexual selection, are no longer generally accepted, and that of the inheritance of acquired characteristics is disputed by certain schools of naturalists, the *essential* ideas of the theory remain unshaken, and form the basis of biological study. Therefore, we of the twentieth century are better prepared than Rousseau's contemporaries to know the utter falsity of the opening sentence of *Emile*: "Everything is good, when it leaves the hands of the Creator. Everything degenerates in the hands of man."



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This fundamental idea that all men are born equal and good, and that it is society and its conventions which degrade and deform men, is the utterly false note of this remarkable book. It leads logically to an absolute condemnation of the state, which, in Rousseau's mind, has no right to exist any longer. "These two words, *country* and *citizen*, ought to be effaced from modern language," is his dictum. As well efface the words father and son! It leads further to the declaration that "forced to combat either nature or social institutions, it is necessary to make either a man or a citizen, because we cannot make both at the same time." This is likewise a false conclusion. Civilization, which begins with social relations, is no more antagonistic to nature than is the toiling of bees for the hive — unless we mean by nature the freedom and irresponsibility of the beasts of the field; but when we speak of *human* nature, we do not mean that, we mean the animal plus intelligence, out of which grows, with perfect naturalness, the social need of communication, and all the conventions which regulate that communication. Civilization is the highest step that the human race has reached in its evolution. It is not an individual but a collective result. It means first of all in the individual, self-control, recognition of the necessity of law, and the just val-

uation of intelligence as a source of well-being and happiness. An individual who has not reached in his evolution the degree of general development reached by his race, necessarily suffers from his inferiority. The false belief that society is responsible for the misery and degradation of these unfortunates, implies the belief that it can transform them into model citizens at its will. This is Rousseau's illusion, and it survives among us in the Utopian and socialistic dreams of radical reformers in all countries, and particularly in France, where, according to one of her brilliant writers, it has developed "the miraculous mentality, the messianic state of mind; and positive minds that laugh at Lourdes and its prodigies, would be very much surprised to have it shown them that they are expecting from the state political and social miracles far more astonishing than those of the Virgin of the Pyrenees. Among the masses, the belief has more and more deeply strengthened and rooted itself, that the state has only to will it, in order to change water into wine, brass into gold, bread into cake, and poverty into riches."

Under the dominion of this false idea of society and its power, Rousseau builds up his educational ideal. He chooses for his example of it a child of the rich, because the poor need no education. Life

itself makes men of them, and educates them heroically. Since society restrains, Emile is to be allowed to develop in absolute freedom from any restraint, except the consequences of his own actions. To secure that freedom more perfectly, he is to be an orphan, under the sole guidance of a tutor, young, impressionable, sympathetic, and sensible. He is to live in the country and grow up a sturdy, robust little animal that can talk and ask questions. The child's education is to begin before he can speak or understand, but it is to be of a purely negative character. He is to be taught nothing directly. He is to be neither punished nor reprimanded for anything he does; and, until he is twelve years old, it does not make any difference whether he knows, as yet, his right hand from his left. At any rate, he has been happy, and "Is it nothing to be happy?" asks Rousseau. "Is it nothing to leap, to play, to run all day long? In all his life he will never be so busy. Plato, in his *Republic*, which is thought to be so austere, brings up children only by feasts, games, songs, pastimes. It might be said that he has done everything, in teaching them to enjoy themselves very much." Emile's education proceeds under the same dominant idea that he is never to learn under the impression that he is learning; and at this juncture, Rousseau evokes the example of



his imaginary savage who, "obeying nobody, with no other law than his own will, is yet forced to reason at every act of his life. He does not make a move, he does not take a step, without having evoked the consequences. Thus the more his body is exercised, the more his mind is enlightened; his strength and his reason increase at the same time — augmented one by the other."

We who know the real savage as he is, obedient to instincts rather than to reason, are not to be seduced by this charming picture of his wisdom; but Rousseau's contemporaries believed in him ardently. There are many excellent lessons in *Emile*, many valuable suggestions, now neglected, that it would be well to recall and put into practice, but it was this passionate appeal for freedom that gave the book its power. Wherever it was read, it loosed the infant's swaddling clothes, relaxed parental authority, broke the discipline of the schoolmaster, substituted persuasion for force, and introduced the vitalizing idea of the necessity for individual training in what most nearly concerns the daily life of man. But there is also much in it that is thoroughly unsound. Restif de la Bretonne in *Monsieur Nicolas*, speaking of the evil effects of the education which his brothers tried to give him, says that their ideas were an anticipation of Rousseau's, a fact which gave him

an insurmountable aversion to *Emile*. He calls it the most dangerous book that has appeared in centuries, full of errors and mistaken views of things, especially in the study of Latin, to which Restif says he owed the development and lucidity of his ideas and the significance of words. He further characterizes *Emile* as a book vitiated by the character of Rousseau,—his taste for the paradoxical, his savage virtue, effect of an ardent and unbridled imagination. Modern critics are much of the same opinion, but they have not pointed out just what particular error has been most persistent, and most fatal to the cause of education.

Rousseau was of the opinion that it is much better for a child to remain entirely ignorant of what study and the sciences are, than to know them only to detest them;—a very excellent idea which, unfortunately, has never found any general acceptance; while, on the other hand, its corollary, the idea of teaching through amusement to make him like them, has become so dominant a part of every received system of education, that we are in danger of losing the power to educate at all.

This unfortunate idea received another direction from Pestalozzi, and culminated with Froebel.

Pestalozzi, unlike Rousseau, was neither morbid nor self-centered. He was romantic, impressionable,

tenderly affectionate, full of trust and confidence in his fellow-men and utterly absorbed in one generous, noble idea — that of lifting the lower classes of his country out of wretched ignorance and painful servitude into enlightened independence. He believed that a rational system of education could effect this change. But his idea was vastly greater than his power of execution. He himself was almost entirely without learning; when he began to teach, he was unable even to read, write, or cipher correctly; but what he lacked in knowledge, he amply supplied with a zeal, an untiring energy, a power of assimilation and growth, and an intuition into the child's needs that made him the most remarkable teacher of his day. In his valuable book, *How Gertrude Teaches her Children* (which, by the way, says nothing either of Gertrude or her children), we follow the history of the development of his educational idea, through his various experiments, failures, successes, and are astonished at the conjunction of so much rare, good sense with such childlike naïveté. He has explained it himself. "With gray hair, I was still a child;" and like a child he built castle after castle in the air, only to see them dissolve into clouds, when he woke from his dreams. He reports that he was called a fool, an idiot who never really



knew what he did want, an insane man incapable of being helped until he was ashes. He carefully copies a most unflattering description of himself, written out by a schoolmaster who later became his disciple.

"I had heard," writes the schoolmaster, "that he had once been seen going to Basel with his shoes tied with straw, because he had given away his buckles to a beggar. I had read *Lienhard and Gertrude*, believed in the buckles; but, that he was a fool, I could not get into my head. In short, I wished to see what he was like, and went to Burgdorf. His first appearance astounded me. He came with his stockings hanging down, dusty, visibly disturbed by the call of another visitor. I cannot describe what I felt at this moment. It was almost like pity mingled with wonder."

It was the child again, utterly unconscious of external appearance, wholly absorbed in the task at hand. The schoolroom showed the same disorder. The children were running about, talking, or helping each other at their tasks. Yet order was growing out of this disorder. There was *life* here. A great idea was struggling for expression, and that idea was that *all true education is primarily self-education*. It is the same idea that underlies Rousseau's *Emile* and it will reappear in Froebel; but Pestalozzi

works it out in a different way. Both men make their appeal to nature as authority, but they do not interpret her alike.

It would be a curious inquiry to ferret out the real meaning attached to this word "nature," so glibly uttered by educators. With Rousseau it almost stands for an imaginary deity presiding over the phenomena of the universe; with Pestalozzi, it often means simply the way in which an individual is instructed by experience; therefore, while Rousseau deems it an impertinence to interfere with nature, Pestalozzi feels that nature needs constant intelligent guidance, when the aim is rational education; and this guidance he gets from observation, feeling, and intuition. He gropes a long time in the darkness before finding the clew. He sees the peasant women of Appenzell, Switzerland, hang a large, brightly colored bird over the cradles of their infants, and when he sees the two- or three-weeks-old child stretching hands and feet towards the bright object, he has found his teacher in the mother, and writes in ecstasy:

"The Appenzeller bird is to me what the bull was to the Egyptians, a sacred thing, and I have done all that I can to begin my teaching where the Appenzeller woman leaves off." He says that the child's education begins the first hour of its birth, and that, consequently, the mother is nature's ap-

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pointed teacher for the infancy and early years of the child's life; and a great thought comes to him, filling him with joyful enthusiasm. His task is to train mothers how to educate their children. He will put the means of elementary instruction into every peasant's hut in Switzerland. No child in all his beloved fatherland shall grow up without the very best elementary training of his faculties, so that his further education may be in his own hands. He snaps his fingers at those who say that he will never be able to persuade mothers to take up this task, and answers exultantly: "It is not work; it is play. It will rob them of no time. It will rather fill up the tediousness of thousands of oppressive moments. Father Bonifacius, who said of Zwingli's hopes in 1517: 'It won't do. In all eternity, mothers will never read the Bible with their children, nor hear them say their morning and evening prayer,' found out, however, that they were doing it in 1522, and said: 'I never would have believed it.' I am sure of my means, and I know and hope that at least before I am buried, there will be, here and there, a Father Bonifacius in this matter who will say what the older one did, in 1522. I can wait. It will come."

He waited all his life. It never *did* come. It has given no signs of coming yet. Dare we say it



never will come? that there never will be to any great extent of numbers, mothers who will realize the importance of the early impressionable years of childhood, and be willing to devote their time to their children's education? Pestalozzi felt that it was an insult to the mother-heart to doubt it, and with ardent enthusiasm he threw himself into the task of making a path for them through the wilderness of ignorance. He did not despair because he had not even a sharp ax to work with. He wielded his dull hatchet with such power that he cleared away for all time many brambles and fallen tree-trunks and let in light where there was darkness before; and though he died without seeing the dearest wish of his heart fulfilled, his labor was not lost. What was good in it still lives, though it slumbers from time to time. Even as I write, there is a new awakening of it in Italy, in the ideal mother-heart of which he dreamed, the heart of Mme. Montessori, and in these days of telegraph and telephone, the news of it circles the world; and for some time again, his ideas will revive in their original force. It takes the great teacher to recognize the great teacher, and it detracts in no wise from Mme. Montessori's power that she is able to give back Pestalozzi to the teaching world, and show that progress is as often looking backward as looking forward, and that he is

poor indeed, that refuses to accept the inheritance of the past.

Pestalozzi criticised the schools of his time as machines which artificially suffocated in the child all the results of force and experience which Nature herself had given him. He says that so far as he was able to judge of the higher instruction of the schools, it seemed to him to be brought to a perfection whose splendor dazzled his ignorance, as the sunlight dazzles the mole. The secondary schools were also far above the plane of his knowledge, and in the elementary schools he saw pupils and teachers working with an ant-like diligence and an ant-like fidelity, the service and success of which he could not deny; but he concludes: "When I concentrate my attention upon the character of the instruction as a whole, in relation to the actual and true condition of the mass of individuals to be taught, then it seems to me that the little which I can do, with all my ignorance, is nevertheless infinitely more than that which I see the people really enjoying; and the more I thought about the latter, the more I found that what seems to flow for them in books like a mighty stream, evaporates in the village and in the schoolroom in a mist whose moist obscurity neither wets the people nor leaves them dry, and does not furnish them with the advantages either of day or of night. I could

not conceal from myself the fact that school instruction as really practiced was absolutely worthless to the great majority of the higher class and to the entire lower class."

Not in books, therefore, will he look for help, but in man's five senses and the environment to which they answer. "As a physical being, you are nothing but your five senses," he writes; "consequently the clearness or obscurity of your ideas must absolutely depend on the nearness or distance according to which all external objects touch these five senses. . . . Observation is the foundation of all knowledge. . . . Human power, common sense, mother-wit, are to me the only guarantees of the value of instruction. To the child, definite ideas are those only to whose clearness his own experience can contribute nothing more. Mushrooms spring up quickly on every dung-pile in rainy weather, and in the same rapid way, definitions, learned without observation, beget a mushroom wisdom that quickly dies in the sunlight and is recognized by its poisonous exhalations."

He finds that the modes of interpreting the experiences of the senses may be reduced to three, namely: number, form, and language.

1. How many objects and how many kinds of them do the eyes recognize?



2. How do they look? that is, what is their form and outline?

3. What are they called?

Consequently, number, form, and language are the elementary means of instruction. Objects, not books, are put before the child for his inspection. He learns to count and reckon with pebbles or other small objects. His study of form begins with making straight lines, angles, and curves. Before he is taught to read, he must accurately reproduce all the sounds and combinations of sounds in his language; and here the great teacher falls into certain extravagances that were the most easily imitated, and therefore spread the most rapidly, while the really great ideas which inspired him were never completely understood, because, as he said of himself, he lacked the language to express to others what was clear to his own understanding. And that happens which always happens with an individual method. Living and fruitful with the great teacher, it becomes dead and sterile with the mere imitator.

The best criticism of this ridiculous imitation, with which I am acquainted, is to be found in *Jugenderinnerungen eines alten Mannes* by the German artist, Wilhelm von Kügelgen. Writing of the instruction he received in childhood, he says that, as he remembers it, it was the Pestalozzi-Krugian

method (Krug was a disciple of Pestalozzi), "by which it mattered very much less what was learned, than the manner in which you learned it. Learning had become its own object, and the formal culture of the understanding was to go hand in hand with special knowledge. The method of the older schools from practice to theory, from faith to insight, had been forsaken, and teachers were experimenting with a contrary method; for nothing seemed more rational than to fashion the vessel before pouring anything into it. How dangerous in its consequences and contrary to nature this method is, only few could understand then, because experience was wanting. The best intellects favored it, and to teach in the old way was to be considered a Philistine. So now, I had first to forget all that I had been taught, and begin all over again under the discipline of the new method. For to be able to read before thoroughly comprehending one's language seemed untenable; and even language was worthless without the necessary information concerning each vocal and consonant sound. Therefore, there was not a little to be done, before it was possible to begin the real instruction in reading. Teacher and pupil opened wide their mouths before each other, the former to show in what position he placed his tongue, when he buzzed, hissed, hummed, or clicked,—the latter, in order to furnish

to the master's searching eye the necessary means of inspecting the vocal organs. According as the tongue, teeth, lips, or palate were active, the consonants produced were named hiss, buzz, hum sounds; lip, teeth, palate stop, etc.

"So we buzzed, hummed, and hissed at each other like snakes, and were so much enamored of this occupation that we thought nothing more insipid and old-fashioned than the spelling of the older school. I boasted of my buzzing sounds and palate stops to my friends who went to an ordinary school, and I did not at all mind being laughed at. Although in this way many things were understood, a firm foundation in orthography could not be laid without spelling and syllabification. We reckoned entirely in our heads. Written arithmetic was as yet out of the question. Nothing was accepted before it was seen into; and we could not learn the multiplication table by heart, until we had reckoned it all out and could see that it was really so. When we were in need of observation, our teacher used for that purpose blocks which he made himself, cutting them into different sizes to furnish us the necessary proofs of our problems. So in our leisure hours we played and built with such reckoning blocks until arithmetical proportions were impressed upon us in every way. The size of numbers hovered before me in the



image of these blocks and not in figures. I reckoned according to imaginary blocks, an excellent method, that soon enabled me to do unusual problems for a child of my age. However, this was only the result of practical training, for I had no natural gift for reckoning: it was only implanted in me, and vanished again like a mushroom that had grown over night. I do not know whether it was that I was weakened by too rapid growth, or whether my nature could bear only to a certain degree an activity to which it was not equal; at any rate, after a violent scene in the arithmetic class, our tutor dragged me by the collar to my father's study, loudly complaining that the stupid boy suddenly knew no longer how much one times one is. It was all too true! I had caught and confused myself in a difficult problem in such a way that, all at once, I was unable to see clearly into the simplest of all numerical relations. And so it remains. I formed an invincible repugnance to mental arithmetic, was not tormented with it any longer, but was introduced to the mechanism of cipher reckoning, in which, however, I made very little progress.

“Meanwhile Latin was begun; history, geography, natural history carried on; yet, to my shame, I must confess that at that time it was all one to me what the Romans called their tables, whether *mensa* or

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otherwise, whether Sardanapalus had been a weakling or a hero, whether the earth was a plane, a ball, or a triangle, and whether the fishes suckled their young or brought them up on a bottle. In a word, all desire for knowledge was dead in me, and I would much rather have drawn the whole day long, or done some other practical thing from which something would have resulted."

Pestalozzi would have wept heart-broken over such a report in his name. Assuredly, Froebel would do the same thing, could he revisit us and see what we have done, and are doing, to education in his name.

Froebel owed very much to Pestalozzi, with whom he spent two years. He speaks of this experience as being "glorious," but he thought inner unity and correlation were lacking in Pestalozzi's work. Like Pestalozzi, he lays the supreme stress on the child's creative self-activity, and believes the mother is by nature the best and truest teacher of its earliest years. Like Pestalozzi, he pays his tribute to the Appenzell bird, swinging above the infant's cradle, and feels that the senses are the source of knowledge and that joyous spontaneity in exercising them is nature's method of teaching, and that we should do our best to imitate it. Like Pestalozzi, he believes firmly in the educational value of manual labor, just as Locke had believed in it something like one hun-

dred and fifty years before them. Like Pestalozzi, he was called an "old fool" as he played with the children on the village green; and like his great contemporary, he cared little what the world said of him so long as his children loved and understood him. But Froebel, unlike Pestalozzi, was a mystic. While object teaching, with Pestalozzi, exists for the sake of the object itself, in order that it may truly and definitely speak to the child as it really appears, with Froebel the object is not an end in itself, but a means to a larger end which he defines as the consciousness of "the unity of the universe, which unity is God." With him the whole aim of instruction is not knowledge, but spiritual power; by which he means recognition of "God in humanity, humanity in God; God in nature, nature from God," and then, "the synthesis between humanity and nature, the recognition of the tri-unity which makes up the result of this *connection* or unifying of *opposites*."

It has a lofty sound, this mystical formula; but when the mind tries to grasp its meaning, it seems to resolve itself into the familiar theory of pantheism. But Froebel energetically denied that he was a pantheist. "The pantheistic view," he said, "is outgrown, and we have nothing more to do with an inseparable Unity, but with Trinity. Trinity has become the corner-stone which the people have re-



jected, because they do not understand it. The triple Unity of God is obvious in all His works to eyes that can see. Have we not always and everywhere a trinity of contrasts and their intermedium? . . . But I do not say, as the Pantheist does, that the world is God's body, that God dwells in it as in a house. But the spirit of God dwells and lives in nature, produces, fosters, and unfolds everything, as the common life-principle. In like manner, the spirit of God dwells in His work, and fosters and preserves it."

This "dwelling in nature" and "dwelling in the world" is a distinction without a difference, which it is unnecessary to insist upon, since even the most devoted Froebelians do not hesitate to admit that their master is profound to obscurity. To the ordinary intelligence a "triple Unity" is no clearer than the expression of a one-legged quadruped: it is simply a contradiction in terms. Certainly, we may speak of the universe as a unity in the sense of there being an interrelation of all its parts, so that nothing exists entirely isolated; and this is evidently what Froebel means, for he says that unity is not sameness; but this thought is neither new, being so obvious, nor has it that widely suggestive, closely personal and stimulating character which can make it a great vitalizing force to the ordinary intellect.

Neither the God of the old Pantheism nor that of the neo-pantheism of Froebel is the all-seeing, all-loving Father to whom the weary and the suffering turn for rest and consolation. The belief that the divine is in us may flatter and sustain us in the sunshine; but in the hours of pain and desolation, we repeat the cry of agony that rang out from the cross, and we *know* that we are human, not divine, and that we need help from some source that is higher than ourselves.

Froebel's persistency in regarding all objects as mere symbols of spiritual truth led him to declare that unless the kindergarten work which he originated resulted in this consciousness of unity with God, and the subjection of the senses to the spirit, it was absolutely valueless. All other education was to him but whitewashed barbarism. All the gifts and occupations of the kindergarten were planned to lead the child's intellect to his idea of the universe. These gifts were the signs of his ideas and he never doubted their value in this direction, for he said that God had directed him in his plan. "The world of crystals" proclaimed to him, he said, "in distinct and unequivocal terms, the laws of human life."

Many attempts, unfortunately not successful, have been made to give to Froebel's symbolism a clear, intelligible form, and Froebelians as gravely discuss

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"the psychology of the ball," as the professor of the Grand Academy of Logado discussed the project of extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers; but their grave assertions, to quote a clever mathematician, "have no meaning interpreted in terms of external reality."

"The most pregnant thought which arose in me at this period," writes Froebel of his youth, "was this: All is unity, all rests in unity, all springs from unity; strives for and leads up to unity, and returns to unity at last. This striving in unity and after unity is the cause of the several aspects of life."

When we closely examine this thought so pregnant to him that he felt it ought to be equally pregnant to others, and therefore deserved to be the supreme aim of education, we find it singularly obscure and contradictory. In the first place, if all *is* unity, there is no necessity for striving after what already exists. If everything rests in unity, there can be no strife, for strife contradicts the idea of rest. Again, to return to what has never been abandoned is another contradiction; and lastly, the admission of several aspects of life as a result of the strife in unity and after unity is really an assertion that there is no unity in unity. In short, far from being pregnant to the ordinary mind, the thought is difficult and obscure. Its pregnancy to Froebel lay



in the fact that he had created the hypothesis of unity, and seeing contradictions to it everywhere, it became the exhaustless problem and task of his life to solve these contradictions, which he did by his ingenious law of opposites and their reconciliation. Even in language he carries his symbolism so far as to say that the vowels express unity and the consonants individuality; and he gives lists of words to the sound of which he attaches fancied manifestations of spirituality. His search for contrasts and connections was a never ceasing well of refreshment and strength to him, and he would fain lead all men to quaff of its waters; and though he founded no philosophical system, he had wonderful flashes of intuition that give him a place among philosophical thinkers. "Force and matter," he says, anticipating Le Bon, "are inseparably one. . . . It is impossible to think one, without thinking the other." He sees that the basis of ethics is the need of inner harmony with the highest good known to us, and that any other incentive is ignoble, and says:

"We ought to lift and strengthen human nature, but we degrade and weaken it when we seek to lead it to good conduct by means of a bait, even if the bait beckons to a future world; when we use even the most spiritual and external incentive for a better life, and leave undeveloped the inner, self-active forces

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which in every human being prompt the representation of a pure humanity."

But his one great service to the cause of education is that he taught the world as no educational reformer, not even his great master, Pestalozzi, has ever so successfully done, the unrecognized truth that a child's education is his own individual work, and that the teacher's only business is to stimulate him to educate himself. He believes with his great predecessor that inner growth is the only real growth.

"To stir up, to animate, to strengthen the pleasure and power of the human being to labor uninterruptedly *at his own education* has become and always remained the fundamental principle and aim of my educational work."

He is so firmly persuaded of the regenerative power of self-activity that he declares:

"Freedom cannot be bestowed upon us. God himself cannot bestow it upon us; since it must be the product of our moral and intellectual unfettering, which it is possible to attain only by self-activity."

He thinks little of "spacious schoolrooms as such," and says "they are not sufficient, if the good ventilation has taken the place of higher spiritual life. Airy, bright schoolrooms are a great, a pre-

cious boon, worthy the daily gratitude of teacher and pupil, but alone, they are not sufficient."

He would not have the child spoiled or pampered in any way. His food must be "extremely simple, and eaten only when hungry, not for the sake of eating." . . . His "clothes in form and cut and color should never become an object in themselves, else they will soon make him frivolous and vain." The individuality of each child must be sacredly respected, and neither bribes nor punishments are to be used to influence it. Play is the child's natural activity: judiciously directed, it becomes discipline, creative activity, education. Forced learning is useless learning, for it is never assimilated, therefore quickly forgotten; only what interests the child and finds in his mind some point of attachment will not perish but will enrich the child's knowledge.

"As a state machine," says Froebel, speaking of his work as an innovation, "I should have been engaged in cutting out and modeling other state machines. But I only wished to train up *free thinking, independent men.*"

Although he believed that the teaching of the young child is particularly woman's work, and like Pestalozzi wished to put into the hands of every mother the means of training her infant properly, he had no sympathy at all with the movement for



the higher education of women, begun in his day. He felt that it was simply the expression of personal ambition, not love of knowledge,—a wish to escape the narrower and more intimate duties of the fire-side. He believed that these very experiences are the real education of women, and not the cramming of facts and theories. He was not at all optimistic about the immediate success of his kindergarten work, feeling himself misunderstood, and unable to explain clearly just what he wished to do. His warm friend and disciple, Baroness B. von Marenholz-Bülow, to whom we owe the most intimate knowledge of his personality, said of him: "It was impossible to hold him for a long time to one train of thought,"—a rather singular defect in a philosopher whose hobby was unity; and she adds, elsewhere, "But even genius is subject to error, and often carries its fundamental thought to its logical result in a one-sided manner, and from this liability, Froebel cannot be said to be free."

The real truth is that the best of Froebel's educational ideas are those of the self-educated man, as were Pestalozzi's; and as such, they are perfectly admirable and correct; but his methods are extremely artificial, in spite of the fact that he tried to reduce the experiences of his own self-culture to a system. The proof of their artificiality is that he him-

self is a most admirable example of the utter unnecessariness of his own educational methods which were developed in his maturity, after fifteen years of constant meditation. He wrote of his own work as a schoolboy that he learned to repeat his lessons in physical geography like a parrot,—“speaking much and knowing nothing”; that all the teaching he had on the subject had not the slightest connection with real life, and that as for his spelling, he never knew with what subject it was connected, “it hovered in the air,” where, by the way, it continues to hover, persistently refusing to come down and settle anywhere. He reported of his work in geometry that it was “piecemeal patch-work”; yet if we may judge a tree by its fruits, his early education, however unsatisfactory it may have been, did not stifle his self-activity. Can we say the same of the fruits of his educational life work,—the kindergarten?

In his admirable book, *Educational Reformers*, written with beautiful clearness and inspired by generous enthusiasm, R. H. Quick approaches the name of Froebel in a spirit of distrust, ostensibly not so much in the great reformer as in himself. He speaks of Froebel as one whom he fails to understand completely, who seems to have access to a world shut out from ordinary mortals, and about the

nature of whose visions we hesitate at times. He confesses that he is conscious when writing about him of wanting the "spring," because he is unable to determine whether his utterances at times are really the expression of deep truth or absolutely meaningless.

It took great courage in the face of the excessive enthusiasm awakened by the kindergarten movement to express so clearly some years ago so vital a criticism of Froebel. After several generations of experience in the work in Germany, and two generations in the United States, it requires no courage whatever, but merely a sense of justice and a love of truth, to repeat the criticism in a more unequivocal form. We read the prophecies of the new millennium which was to follow in education the adoption of this great innovation, and we record with chagrin that they have utterly failed.

"When a few generations shall have passed through such schools," writes one, "teachers will fully comprehend Froebel's prophetic revelation of the unity between coöperation and perfect individuality, and the war between individualism and socialism shall be at an end."

The fact is that the war was never so bitter, never seemingly so remote from its end, as at the present day. Froebel recorded it as his "deepest



conviction that the time must come when the chasm between things and the more or less abstract conception of things will be filled up," that "philosophy has hitherto been without the true foundation which natural science alone can afford it, and that it is just this foundation which my method of education is to supply." But the philosopher has always endeavored to include in his philosophy all that is known of physical science in his time, and Kant's superiority rests on the very fact that he took into account the recognized scientific beliefs of his day. However, the latest addition to philosophical thought, the work of Henri Bergson, instead of confirming Froebel's prophecy, attempts to show that intuition may penetrate further the mystery of life than pure intelligence which works in matter for practical purposes, and that these intuitions are as yet but transitory flashes which philosophy ought to record; and that "the more she advances, the more she perceives that intuition is the very spirit itself and in a certain sense life itself." He adds that we may pass from intuition to intelligence, but never from intelligence to intuition.

The extraordinary interest which Bergson's work has excited all over the thinking world will probably result in an attempt to fill the chasm between the known and the unknown by intuition, that is, by non-

scientific methods; and it is not amiss here to call attention to Ribot's keen remark on methods in his well-known *Psychologie des Sentiments*.

"It is not concerning the object pursued, but according to the method employed, that love of science may take a false route.

"Scientific mysticism consists in replacing regular proceedings by intuition and divination; in expecting everything from an interior revelation, a supernatural illumination; in substituting the subjective for the objective, faith for demonstration and verification, individual validity for universal validity. Certainly, it would be a gross error to pretend that intuition and divination have not played a capital rôle in the discoveries of savants. They are at the origin of nearly all of them, and there is a moment in which scientific and artistic creation coincide in their psychological conditions; but no savant worthy of the name ever confuses the vision of a truth with the demonstration of a truth. He does not consider it scientific until he has furnished the proofs of it. Mysticism is the reintegration in science of the love of the marvelous, and the illusory desire to act upon nature without previous researches, without trouble, without work.

"The intellectual emotion has, therefore, two principal morbid forms: doubt, which in its last

term ends in dissolution, and mysticism, which is only a deviation whose essence consists in substituting imaginary proceedings for logical ones."

The twentieth century is peculiarly a prey to these two morbid forms of intellectual emotion,—a doubt ending in dissolution which we flatter ourselves is tolerance and breadth of view, and mysticism which is the expression of the mental hunger to resolve doubt into certainty regarding the unknown in which we are submerged; and these two mental states are precisely the negation of what Froebel hoped for the race, although he himself, according to Baroness von Marenholz-Bülow, had a "mind living entirely under the power of intuition." But he is himself a striking example of his law of contrasts, for it is in the concrete that he worked, it was the senses that he trusted, it was fact that he sought; but he sought it in order to transfigure it into what it was not. To him the material world was only a symbol of the spiritual one, and the only use of education he believed to lie in leading the child to recognize the world as a symbol and God as the ultimate cause of all things. To one who said that his law of unity was nothing but an empty phrase, he replied:

"But if you think that my educational materials are useful, this cannot be because of their exterior, which is as simple as possible, and contains nothing



new. The worth of them is to be found exclusively in their application, that is, in the method in which I use them. But this method consists in the application of that law which you characterize as an 'empty phrase.' The whole meaning of my educational method rests upon this law alone. The method stands or falls with the recognition or non-recognition of it. Everything that is left is mere material, the working of which proceeds according to the law, and without that law would not be practicable."

Again he asserts: "The keystone of the kindergarten activity is the transformation of material, and therefore the perception of the mutual connectedness of the various solid forms, their derivation from one another, and the connection of all with the primary unity of space."

It would be entirely unnecessary to insist upon the fact that however valuable this keystone may have seemed in Froebel's eyes, it has been absolutely without significance in practical application, for the simple reason that like all symbolism it is purely artificial. The dreamer who sees in the leaping flames of the chimney fire curious shapes of castles and animals, and follows their transformation in delight, interpreting them by fantastic tales which he creates, is unable to point them out to another eye and thus invest them with the weird charm that they have for

his own. Nor is it particularly desirable that he should be able to do this, if he is to insist that he sees *real* castles and *real* animals instead of the creations of his excited fancy. Froebel was this fireside dreamer, and he looked for a great spiritual awakening as the result of his method of seeing visions. Has it come? Were we ever farther away from it than to-day? He looked for a great increase of self-activity, independence, and pure happiness. Can we find that pure happiness anywhere? As I write, there come reports from Germany that 1000 youths kill themselves in that country every year, and that Prussia alone reports this year 731 suicides of students. An inquiry into 1215 recent cases shows that 37% were caused by fear of punishment or fear of not passing examinations. "The tendency of family training destroys discipline," says one authority, "and pessimistic writers are the favorite authors of the young."

But Froebel's method has for its basic theory that the child should be governed as little as possible, so that his individuality may not be warped or destroyed. Play is his element; therefore, let him learn in play.

Question the young as to what they recall of the kindergarten, and they will report it as a delightful

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place where they thought that they were doing as they pleased, yet were doing exactly what the teacher wished them to do. They remember the attention given to neatness and cleanliness, because of the rewards and punishments attending neatness and cleanliness; the little stars pasted close to their names on the blackboard; or the bright red ring marked on the palm of the hand, of which they were taught to be as proud as a young savage of his tattooed face. They remember the feast day once a week, when they all brought cake and cream and ate together,— or the Christmas tree for whose presents each one contributed a quarter on the week preceding the holidays. They remember, too, the seats of honor next the teacher, assigned for good behavior or superior work, and the row of chairs in disgrace given to those who had not polished their shoes or had come with dirty faces. They recall the little excursions in park and field; but when we sum up the result, we know that it is pitifully remote from that which Froebel desired and often exactly the contrary of it, and that it does not begin to equal in value the memories and training of a real home in which the mother with the intuition of love answers the child's spontaneous needs, and gives him real liberty, not a feigned one. In short, it is perilously like raising



chickens by the incubator method, in preference to the natural one; and those who really understand children feel keenly its defects.

"The whole inner life of a child," writes Fanny Lewald in her autobiography, "is a half-waking. As the child passes its first month in a half-sleep, so in like manner it continues mentally for a long time through its childhood in this condition. All its thinking is wonder, guessing; its whole existence a spoken or an inaudible question; and the natural inclinations of children, together with their manner of development, are so different in each one of them, that we must let them quietly go their own way, unless some serious appearance makes it necessary to anticipate their gradual awakening in self-examination and self-knowledge. The more a child is let alone in peace, the more surely it finds what is suitable to itself."

Froebel would have been the very first to give his entire approval to this statement; yet in his name we break ruthlessly into this slow-going dream-life of the child to trouble him with our invidious distinctions of mental power and external appearance, stimulating or shaming him by rewards and punishments, substituting for his free inventions and natural play our artificial symbolic games, in which if he could be conscious of the symbol, which fortu-

nately he is not, he would hate the play just as he hates medicine even when it is sugar-coated. And we have still another sin against children to answer for in weakening them physically and mentally by too early hothouse culture. It is now more than forty years since Preyer, in his well-known book, *Die Seele des Kindes*, called the attention of his readers to the fact that the continual occupation of young children on fine work like paper-pricking, threading beads, card-sewing, etc., as practiced in German kindergarten schools, although highly recommended, is undoubtedly very harmful to the eyes, even in the best light. But we have given no heed to the warning, preferring to pay for our strings of beads and bright worsted-work samples with the most precious of physical gifts — a keen, clear vision; for are there not oculists and spectacles, when the sight fails?

There is yet another direction in which evil, not good, has come to us in Froebel's name, and yet, as in other cases, this evil is one which he would have deeply deplored; nay, more, it is one against which his whole method was intended to be a safeguard. The evil is the loss of initiative in the pupil by making amusement the chief incentive to study; and it has passed from the kindergartens to the upper grades and high schools. The first manifestation of

the evil is in reversing the rôle of pupil and teacher, by concentrating the attention on the latter instead of on the former, and giving him the active and the pupil the passive rôle,—the very thing against which Froebel raised a cry. The main question in educational circles is no longer, What is the pupil doing? but, What is the teacher doing to make his subject attractive? Can he hold the attention of his pupils? Can he make his recitation as interesting as a ball game or a vaudeville performance? The real fact is that it is the teacher who is being educated at the expense of the pupil, who is often a mere spectator at a clever performance. It is the teacher who grips the subject closely in its unattractive nakedness, and then exercises his imagination in clothing it in an attractive garb for his pupils. He carries his ingenuity to the most ludicrous lengths in order to avoid calling things by their right names, lest the pupil should not enjoy them. Go into any of our primary schools, and you will find young women teaching fractions by calling the circles which they make on the blackboard pies, and dividing them into slices or pieces of pie; because the child is supposed to be more familiar with the pie than with the circle, and we must proceed from the known to the unknown, joining our circle apperceptively to the child's agreeable recollections of the pie. Our fear



that the child might not like the circle unless we assure him that it is a pie, is akin to Nick Bottom's apprehension for the ladies who are to be assured that the lion is no real lion, but only Snug, the joiner.

In many of our educational journals we may read enthusiastic descriptions of this sort of teaching, and I once saw it gravely asserted that subtraction may be delightfully taught by taking pieces of chalk, giving them children's names: Clarence, Theodora, Alberta, Peruna (Susan and James and John exist no longer), and sending some of them to church and keeping some of them home. This puerile effort to avoid the abstract by insisting on the concrete is a deliberate extinction of the power to think, and lies at the root of the pupil's helplessness when he comes to the problems of pure geometry and must think in lines and circles instead of in puddings and pies. It is high time that common sense should supplant method, and that directness, not circumlocution, should be recognized as the most effective way of arriving at truth. Instead of calling six white marks on a blackboard, soldiers, pieces of pie, or children, or trees, let them appear as they are,—white lines to which other white lines may be added or from which they may be taken away. In this case, the child's attention is not distracted by a mental image forced upon him sometimes to the exclusion of the

subject to be taught. Besides, the white lines are just exactly as concrete as lines, as when they are called what they are not, and the simplicity of the reality makes it far more effective than the image-making.

When the teacher himself wishes to learn anything, he always learns it in this simple way. He does not start playing with his subject, dance all round it, cover it over with beautiful flowers; he goes straight up to it and takes hold of it, rough or smooth. He does not concern himself at all with its relation to anything else. He gives a clear field to this one subject which he wishes to know. It is only later, when the subject stands out distinctly before him, that he seizes it anew in all its relations to what he already knows, and feels it in harmony with his previous knowledge. He calls this harmony correlation, but he never dreamed of beginning with it. When he began studying the elm trees of the city park, he did not think it necessary to correlate them with the *One Hoss Shay*, nor study the American Revolution to correlate them with the Washington Elm at Cambridge. That is like going round the world to get into your neighbor's back yard: and alas! in education at present, that is the fashionable method of getting there! By no means are you to climb over the fence and jump down, or even to get

in through the back gate, or go around by the front. You would be getting there too soon, and that is not the sole object of your activity. You are to get there with the universe in your vest-pocket.

We are witnesses of such tragi-comic getting there, or rather *never* getting there, that it might be just as well to try to teach the children as we teach ourselves, and save their time and their intelligence from utter loss, instead of attempting to boil the universe in a tea-pot and serve them the drink piping hot. Let the teacher not be afraid of being called old-fashioned. There are some things that will always be in fashion, though they are older by far than the Pyramids. The sun will always rise in the east and set in the west. An old hen will always beat the best incubator in raising a brood of chickens. The best way to learn to swim will always be to throw yourself into the water instead of going through the motions on land; and the best teacher will always be the one who puts as little as possible of himself between the pupil and his subject and inspires him with a desire to *work* it out, and not to play with it.

All real scholars will tell you that they have been self-educated, but that among their teachers, the best were those who were an inspiration to them through their ripeness and wisdom, making learning really appear their ornament and staff of life in-



stead of being mere hide-bound pedantry. But these self-educated men when turned educational reformers have always seemed to distrust what really made them what they are, and have tried to introduce something new which they felt would supply this self-training or incite to it, and hence have often fallen into error. They are like the tender father whose shrewdness and untiring perseverance and struggles with difficulties have made him a man of power, but who, not recognizing the fact, would spare his son all the trials which he himself has undergone, and therefore makes a mollycoddle out of him. So by our efforts to amuse and interest flagging attention, by our zeal to smooth away educational difficulties, by our desire to surround the young with all the comforts and luxuries of modern civilization, we are building elegant hot-houses for mollycoddles. But it is fearless men and women, not mollycoddles, that modern civilization demands,—men and women who can endure the buffets of adversity as well as pass unspoiled through triumph and success.

Among the causes of suicide among the German youth were the most trifling things,—a petulant word, a box on the ear, a wish refused! What a severe comment upon family training, where the child is master or is reasoned with, coaxed, and bribed, instead of being taught the wholesome discipline of obedi-

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ence! What a deplorable sign of the absence of any deep affection for home and family! But this must naturally result from the child's too early separation from mother and home and from its being taught to find its pleasures in the society of other children, or when it has no fixed habitation around which its young memories may entwine. This is particularly the case with children in America. The city directory of St. Louis for 1912 reports 181,000 changes of residence in the past year. That means that 55% of its population are practically migratory, and this is probably the condition of affairs in most of our great cities. But a young child is not transplanted with impunity any more than a young plant. Speaking of the length of time during which the servants of her father's household remained in the family, and of the absence of continual change of place during her childhood, Fanny Lewald says:

"That was what gave our life a firm foothold. We were not obliged to accustom ourselves to constantly new impressions. Our thoughts were not drawn away from one thing to another. These people were our very own; and just as the servants about us remained the same, so our external surroundings were changed but once, in my eleventh year, when father and mother took us on a little journey to Memel. An annual change for a summer resi-

dence was not considered necessary in our day, and either my mother or one of us children must be dangerously ill, before my parents would have consented to a separation. They had bound themselves to each other for love, and lived in the good old faith that men and women marry to be as much together as possible. This persistency of environment had for us — or, to limit this statement personally, had for me — the great advantage of making me feel really at home in our little world; and I do not believe that children in the present fashionable migratory life of families find in their travels and changes of summer and winter residence the slightest compensation for that intimate home feeling which was ours. For if, in the general development of humanity, it is indispensable to know a thing intimately, in order to understand it perfectly, then for the development of a child this is the case in a still higher degree, since the child even under the quietest conditions of life, daily, nay, hourly, is assimilating such a quantity of new ideas, has so many new experiences to make, and as his organism must be so much more receptive and excitable than that of the grown person, he should be guarded from sudden and frequent changes instead of being exposed to them.

“I can never suppress a feeling of pity when in traveling I meet children whose parents through self-



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love are dragging them about with them. Now excited, now worn out, here pampered and praised beyond measure by strangers and friends, and there repulsed by parents and maids when it is inconvenient, for what they are allowed to do at home, the poor little creatures find no comfort anywhere. And now and then when I took the pains to ask the little things what they had lately seen in their travels, they remembered nothing but some triviality which they might have seen just as well, and much more easily, at home. A child, in the care of some honest nurse, picking buttercups on some grassy spot or playing with a little dog, is being a thousand times better brought up and is learning immeasurably more things of real value for life, than the little creature who is being led up and down in a strange city to-day, now blinking with stupid little eyes at something it is told is the sea, and to-morrow trailed around in a zoölogical garden in a strange city, among faces entirely new to it. However, there is one fortunate thing for children in their instinctive impulse of self-preservation which guards them against a surfeit of new impressions and holds them simply to what is suitable for them. A couple of eight- to nine-year-old boys with whom in my presence an effort was made to make them admire a rising balloon, persisted in amusing themselves with a

dog swimming in a ditch at their feet; and a three-year-old little girl in the harbor of Hamburg, when asked to look at the ships, cried out: 'Oh, the little red stockings!' She was looking at a clothes-line on the shore, on which the washing was hung, and found her pleasure in the little stockings which were about the size of her own."

There is an encouraging note in this concluding observation which makes us feel that perhaps in the kindergarten, too, we are not permitted to harm the children as much as we would like, because their instinct of self-preservation saves them from us; and the trivialities which they carry away in their memory are not seriously damaging. Let us take heart, too, with regard to the words "pedagogical" and "psychological," fearing them no longer. These words cover a multitude of educational follies for which perhaps the so-called "teachers' institute" and "teachers' meeting" are in a great measure responsible. The habit of perpetually talking about teachers and teaching, and the natural weariness resulting, leads inevitably either to talking for the sake of talking, or to a desire for change to avoid mental stagnation; and theories, experiments, and reports of them continue to arise, cause their momentary flutter, then pass into oblivion, unless they become fixed by the erection of buildings for their propagation. "When

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I don't know what to say, I holler," said a frank Methodist minister. There is a great amount of "hollering" in the teacher's profession, for the self-same reason, only it goes by another name. It calls itself psychological pedagogy. It is only the true mother and the real poet who can reënter childhood and feel its joys and pains, its wonder and curiosity, in their integrity, and love is the secret of the one and genius of the other: but they lay down no set principles and found no methods. Here and there the sympathy of the mother or the memory and insight of the genius are given to a teacher,—for the real teacher, like the poet, is born, not made,—and then we have an illumination in the teacher's calling; but often that which made its brilliancy and effectiveness, as in Froebel, is purely a personal gift, something wholly incommunicable, and the same method directed by another personality is an absolute failure. The great mistake that method-monsters make is to believe in the method and not in the teacher; and to fail to see that one man's success is often another man's failure.

However, laying aside all questions of method or of teachers, there is something decidedly wrong between the relations of the *results* of public education and the time, money, and effort expended upon it. It is not only in America, but from every coun-



try in Europe, that a loud cry of disappointment and protest is arising; nor is it confined to the patrons and critics of the educational system, it arises from the teachers themselves. High school teachers complain that their pupils are not sufficiently prepared in the ward schools for the work required of them. Colleges and universities complain that the high schools send out their graduates in so raw a condition, mentally, that they are unable to do creditably the work assigned them there; and business men complain that the college graduate is too impractical for their purposes. Where does the fault lie? There is no one who works harder than the ward school teacher, or who is so nearly required to be a microcosm of learning as she. She must be artist, musician, scientist, *littérateur*, and teacher of gymnastics, all in one. The high school teacher is allowed the privilege of specialization, and brings to his work serious preparation and earnest enthusiasm, as well as the college professor.

Then, what is the matter? Simply this: we have set out to do the impossible. We have believed that education is the universal panacea for all the ills of mankind, because ignorance is the source of them. We have believed that ignorance is always curable, and it is not. In the vast majority of cases, we may drive it back from the surface, as we drive back

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an ugly rash in the skin; but the disease is still in the blood and likely to break out anew in a more malignant form; or, to drop the metaphor, the ability to take an education is much rarer than we have thought it to be, while the capacity for taking on a little surface culture is very general. The result is that our high schools and colleges are filled with young people of both sexes, whose minds, so far as learning goes, are in a state of complete stagnation, because they have reached the limit of their capacity for receiving an education. They have a good deal of superficial alertness, are still easily amused, and find abundant sources of amusement in their social intercourse with each other and with those of their teachers who seem to them entertaining. They are mostly the students for whom athletics and social functions exist — who go to high school and college to have a good easy time at the expense of their parents, and are lonesome when they stay at home. If they think of an education at all, it is simply as a passport to society or as a guarantee against having to work with the hands. "Why do you go to college?" I asked a dull boy who was desperately cramming for his examinations. "Because I'm looking for a snap when I graduate," was the frank reply. "I don't want to have to work my way up in life clerking around, or doing hard work on

a small salary. I've been thinking," he added naïvely, "that a college professor has about as easy a job as anybody, and he has social position, too. I'd like to go in for something like that."

It is the attempt to make something worth while out of just such useless material as that, to carve seemly forms out of this cork, and never succeeding, of course, that has brought down upon us so much contempt and criticism as educators. The only way to regain esteem is to brave the storm of indignation which will follow this assertion, and sternly refuse to give the children's bread to those who are looking for nothing but cake. Let the schoolroom once more become a place for serious work; let the family provide for the social entertainment of its members. Let the teacher be a co-worker and guide to work, and cease the rôle of entertainer. The schoolrooms will be thinned; yes, but those who remain will have a chance to be really educated. Fewer teachers would be required. Yes, but those who were employed would receive better salaries and the profession of teaching would rise to a dignity it never will possess under existing circumstances. There is a pretty Oriental tale related by C. D. Warner in his *Relation of Literature to Life*, of a king who placed his son with an excellent preceptor with orders to educate him as he had educated his



own sons, who were very clever and accomplished. After a year's teaching without any perceptible result, the king bitterly reproached the tutor with having broken his promise and acting faithlessly. "O king," replied the tutor, "the education was the same, but the capacities are different. Although silver and gold are produced from a stone, yet those metals are not to be found in every stone. The star Canopus shines all over the world, but the scented leather comes only from Yemen." Have we not been looking for gold in all our stones, and thinking that the scented leather can be found everywhere?

Some eight or nine years ago, Professor Search called the attention of the educational world to the marked difference in mental capacity among the young, and suggested turning the recitation room into a study room in which each child in the presence of his teacher should do only what he could do well without any attempt to keep to a required standard for all. The plan was tried in many schools, but it was not found to work advantageously under all instructors. The absence of the incentive of keeping up to a required standard removed from naturally inert or easily distracted minds their desire to work, and they dawdled away their time.

However, without resorting to the extreme of weeding out the parasitic students, instead of encour-

aging them as we do, an attempt might be made to weed out the curriculum. It could be considerably lightened by removing the weight of minute research and laboratory work which has followed the specialization of the teacher's work; such specialization on the part of the pupil belongs to college and university work, and not to that of the high school, where it is an unwise as well as unnecessary burden to him. It stands to reason that as the teacher himself has found that his subject made heavy enough demands upon him to warrant his giving his entire time and attention to it, the pupil with his immature powers cannot be expected to throw himself entirely into the work of the three or four specialists under whom he is studying. Or if he must do so, let him limit himself to two subjects at the most at one time, that he may save himself the loss that inevitably follows the rapid cramming for a number of unrelated subjects. The discouragement which follows the inability to grasp clearly the subject studied, is the most dangerous mood into which a young mind can fall. Nothing is so humiliating as the consciousness of impotence, and it may be that we owe the bitter pessimistic note of modern literature to this consciousness, as well as the restless seeking for an anodyne in frivolous pleasures and constant change of place. We wish the truth, but we are not yet

strong enough to bear the weight of it without harm.

We need also to be thoroughly convinced that no school training at all is infinitely preferable to that which kills in a young man his power of initiative, his courage in the face of difficulties, his will to work at whatever task falls to him; and makes him willing to pass through life a parasite, receiving all, giving nothing in return, rather than face the tasks of an honest workman. In *Das tägliche Brot*, Clara Viebig has given us a most realistic type of this parasite in Arthur Reschke, of whom his ignorant and ambitious mother wished to make a professional man, in spite of his utter mental incapacity to take a higher education. It is our shame that we are turning out Arthur Reschkes every day instead of an army of honest laborers not ashamed to soil their hands and make them callous in honest work which they can do well. And it is our shame, also, that we are turning out women who recoil from the homely duties of the fireside, and lust after the idleness and vain shows of the world or the vanities of public life. Blessed be the mothers, though they construe not Latin or Greek, in whom the true spirit of motherhood lives and who bequeath it intact to their daughters!

Another deplorable source of weakness in our school work is the exhausting system of examinations,



which increase the burden of teacher and pupil without any compensation for the exhaustion. Every alert teacher knows perfectly well what his pupils know in the subject he is teaching them; and he knows, too, that the examination is not a test of real ability, but of the parrot-like power of the memory and of physical endurance. In *Le Culte de l'Incompétence* Faguet says:

“In our country, examinations are all founded upon a misinterpretation; I mean upon the confusion between knowledge and competency. Competency is what is very conscientiously sought for, and it is thought to be found in knowledge. The examination demands that the candidate shall know something, and the contest demands that he shall know more than others. Hence one of the most painful sores of our civilization.

“The preparation for examinations is an ingurgitation, a heaping up, a cramming which has for its first effect to render even a gifted man entirely passive at the age when his intellectual activity is the keenest. Then, as an effect of overwork during five, eight, or ten years of his youth, he is disgusted with intellectual work and rendered impotent in it for the rest of his life.

“I am persuaded, if I may be allowed to support my argument by an example well known to me, that

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if I have worked a little from twenty-five to sixty-three, it is because I have never but half succeeded in an examination or a contest. Very inquisitive about many things, I was interested in the 'subjects of the program,' but also in other subjects and the program was neglected. I was received. I was oftener refused. In short, I reached my twenty-sixth year behind my contemporaries but not overworked, not exhausted, and not at all disgusted with intellectual work. I know that some of my comrades who never missed an examination, but who passed them all very brilliantly, have worked as hard as I to the sixtieth year, but they are extremely rare."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE VALIANT WOMAN

I CONFESS that I begin this last chapter of my book with many misgivings. I have wandered far away from the rare woman who is its excuse for being, and when I return to her, and try to recall her in all the beauty and simplicity of her character, I feel how insufficient are any words of mine to paint her as she was to me, and to all who knew her and can never forget her.

It was my great misfortune to lose sight of her for a number of years, and when we met again, she was no longer teaching in the public schools. A slight deafness had come upon her, destined, alas! to increase with the years, and she had reluctantly accepted this affliction as an intimation that her work in the schoolroom was over. Many years later she wrote: "I have felt the folding of my hands all too soon in life, as if I had left the field crippled when the sun was not yet low enough."

But in reality she had never left the field, never folded her hands. She was no skulker, no deserter. Her courage never failed. She did not look back-



ward but ever forward, and each morning was a fresh invitation to live anew. She was born to teach, if only by her presence, and she taught till her lips were silenced forever. Her family was the human race. Wherever she met a child, there was her school-room. Wherever she met a young mind eagerly groping its way into light, there she stood with her hand outstretched. She shared the books she read. She talked on the great vital questions,— the conduct of life, the sources of happiness, the relation of man to man, the great *perhaps*; but it was never a forced talk, it arose quite naturally, and it was never vulgarized by the personalities of idle gossip. "I put into circulation as little personal matter as possible," she said once, and she spoke truly.

She brought to her high themes a calm judgment, a ripe experience, and a flexibility in discussion that indicated a mind continually in search of truth and not to be repelled by any form in which it might present itself. Over the great unsolvable problems she troubled herself little, having humanity and the myriad forms of nature to love and to study, and feeling the limitations of the human mind facing the illimitable. To open wider and ever wider the windows of the soul to the beauty of earth and sky, to absorb more and more of human experiences that the eye may look more compassionately on human frail-

ties, the heart throb more in unison with the heart of all,—that was what life meant to her. She did not measure its value by immortality, but by its power of actual growth, no matter within what narrow limits of time that growth might be confined. She did not ask that growth should imply increase of pleasures, but increase of light, increase of vision, increase of sympathetic helpfulness; and she knew that this increase of power must often be bought by pain and travail of spirit. But she also knew, no one better, that it is not given to every soul to accept life as it is, so humbly, so gratefully; that the great mass of mankind need other faiths, other lures, to find life sweet or worth the living, and she would not willingly have deprived any halting soul of its crutch. She only asked that since she herself could walk upright without it, it should not forcibly be thrust upon her. To all the subtle forms of finding life a wretched farce and making one's self miserable over it, she was an utter stranger. The dawn always found her facing the light with the joyous freshness of a child. No gloomy or despairing thought ever passed her lips or flowed from her pen; yet she did not miss sharing the common sorrows of humanity, but she knew how to burn her own smoke, and carried about with her no sooty, stifling atmosphere. Perhaps she owed the poise and serenity

which she had to the purity of her life and the health of her nature.

"I am fortunate," she writes, "in not having by nature a vein of melancholy. I have had little bits of depression, but only rarely. For such I am thankful, otherwise I should have lacked an experience which every one ought to have. I am not naturally nervous, but have had touches of nervousness, and am glad. Now, I can sympathize with nervous people as well as with those who are subject to depression. Indifference or sharp rebuke in any form I find never penetrates me. I easily shake it off; but a touch of tenderness enters my heart. My niece is so loving and gentle, so genuine in every expression of affection, that she often moves me. Yesterday, as I left, she buttoned my coat, tied my bonnet, told me I looked pretty in my new coat and hat; and on the steps she put her arms around me so that I found the tears starting to my eyes; but I was just going, and she did not perceive it. She might have thought me unhappy had she done so. . . . Bitter experiences teach us to pass lightly over little annoyances. So, perhaps, they are not so hurtful in the end; for little causes of vexation are coming constantly to those who notice trifles, or allow them to be disturbing. Perhaps the whole secret of happiness is this: when we cease to resist, we cease to suf-



fer. Then, we must not be slaves to others, and give them the power to wound us or fret us. I have gained much in peace of mind since I have learned the lesson of quietly accepting what I am powerless to change in the past or present, feeling in some way that I cannot see, that it was best for me, and that so very soon our life will be rolled up like a scroll, and all our little sufferings here that we magnify because we are so short-sighted will seem as nothing, if our soul after death begins another existence. But if soul and body die together, why should we fear a perfect rest in everlasting sleep? We usually leave the world like tired children needing sleep. . . .

“Do not expect that the day will ever come when you will have no cross to carry. Never be impatient to get rid of one trouble, for a greater one is waiting to take the vacant place. Goethe says somewhere that happiness must be cultivated like a plant. I do believe we all lose much by not fully appreciating our present blessings. I do not know how it may be with you, but this has been my experience,—at any period of my life to look back and wonder how I could have considered things worth an hour’s worry which should have been entirely eclipsed by some accompanying blessing. Think how much our youth is, or ought to be to us; good teeth, good eyes, fresh, unwrinkled faces, life in every limb! I think now,

how was it possible that I did not fully appreciate the sweet companionship of my sister when she was here on earth. She is gone! . . . Grateful am I to you, for your firm resolve to keep ever before you your present blessings, never looking back with regret, or looking forward to a time when there will be no bitter to balance the sweet. Emerson, my priest and prophet, says: 'Some favorable event raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.' As long as sight and hearing remain with you, and you are not in terrible physical pain, and your two feet will carry you about, remember your promise, and sing in your heart: 'What shall I render to my God for all His gifts to me?'

"When my deafness presents itself to me as a great affliction, I drive away the apparition by the thought that I would not change deafness for a chronic disease that brought me constant pain. Yet my exceeding deafness has narrowed my life to a point. I feel what a prison it is, shutting me out from my kind, and were I rich, I would be blind rather than deaf. One of the best aurists, here, praises my bravery. He does not say as so many do: 'You have your eyes. You have this compen-

sation, that you do not hear many foolish things. No such nonsense! but he says: 'I sometimes wonder how I could bear your deafness!' When he praises my courage, I am like a child. I feel that I must deserve the praise by having the courage which he says I have, or I shall be wearing something not belonging to me. I told him one day that, as some one said of praise received, 'I do not deserve your praise, but I love you the more for your will to praise.' One prefers to be seen through a warm, rich heart, even if it throws its own colors on the objects viewed, than to be seen by one incapable of an enduring love except for himself.

"Whewell contended that loss of vision was preferable to loss of hearing, because it shut one out less from human companionship, and even Lowell said that if he had to give up people or books, he would give up books."

She, too, our valiant woman, would have given up books, priceless as was their companionship to her, rather than the close, living contact of the human heart, loving to feel it beat against her own, loving to share the riches of her own rich nature with those who were poorer in spirit, and doing it with no suave condescension, no real consciousness of her superiority, but with a sense of richness received from them. This was the reason that deafness was an unusually



cruel hardship to her; but she bore it with noble fortitude, rarely speaking of it, and more solicitous about sparing others the fatigue of talking loud than herself the burden of trying to hear.

Yet, even this great barrier did not prevent her from drawing confidences, even from the most reserved. "I don't know why I tell you this. I have never in my life spoken of it before," was the confession she repeatedly heard. "I was not the one to be deaf," she wrote sadly, alluding once to this fact in her relation to others. Nor was she. She made friends among all classes of people, rich and poor, high and low, and was grateful for every new life that came into her own to broaden its outlook and enlarge its sympathy. It was her destiny to have no settled home, to live in many states, and almost always among strangers, so that there came to her early a vivid sense of human kinship. "I feel so near to the heart of the people," she says, writing from New Mexico, "that when I take my walks abroad I feel like speaking to every one whose appearance bespeaks a life of hardship. There is an old Mexican woman poorly clad with whom I always exchange a greeting, although we do not express ourselves in the same language. Her face always lights up as when old friends meet. What a puzzle it is to me, that in this short, mysterious life of ours, coming

from we know not where, going at its close we know not where, with everything to make us humble and gentle, so many of us should be purse or station proud! My idea of generosity does not consist in the giving of material things, but in bestowing very freely the best spiritual gifts that the heart ever has, love, kindness, real sympathy for trials, human interests, and the like."

How freely she gave of her own warm heart, only she herself knew; for although no one was in reality ever more individual than she, no one was ever more genuinely impersonal, more fluid, more ready to sink herself out of sight and live sympathetically in the experience of others. And there came with this power an enlarged vision, an exquisitely fine tolerance, a feeling of universal kinship, that made her the first one to whom we wished to go with something beautiful or noble to show her, or to tell her of it, sure of her enthusiasm and appreciation,—or with something sorrowful to relate, sure of her profound sympathy,—so large was her nature, so exquisitely attuned to every chord of human joy or human woe.

The children of her friends, or the children of the families among whom she boarded, were the objects of her unwearying, loving care. She kept herself informed of their school work, helped them and encouraged them in their studies, taught them fine

poems, gave them books, guided their reading, and incited them in various ways to study and to learn.

I recall one summer afternoon in one of the Pacific coast towns, as we were walking down the street together, she suddenly stopped and beckoned to a small boy of eight or nine who was trundling his hoop at some distance from us. When he came up, he lifted his cap, smiling brightly, and she introduced him to me as her landlady's son, and asked him to recite for me the last poem which he had learned. The boy immediately recited *The Chambered Nautilus*, and as the childish voice repeated the noble lines,

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!"

there flashed over me again, as so often before, a glad and grateful consciousness of the beautiful unselfishness of this noble woman, her immense patience, the light she radiated everywhere, the good she did so simply, so effectually, passing on the world's great treasures of thought and feeling from child to child, instead of hiving its wisdom for herself alone.

"I love the boy!" she exclaimed when we were alone again. "He looks so beautiful to me as he recites his poems. We are sort of chums. We are just starting on our twenty-eighth poem. The other



day, he was starting on a new term with a new teacher and was to get his new books, so he said to me: 'I won't be able to have any poem to-morrow.' I replied, 'Though the sky fall, we must have our poetry!' He smiled acquiescence. But I thought his new poem should be easy, so I selected, *We are Seven*. I don't give him more lines than he can learn in five or six minutes, then we go over an old one. He learns each new poem more easily, and it is wonderful to me how he remembers those learned, but then I never let him forget any. His teacher tries to have all her pupils read with expression, and she has hurt his reading. It was natural, before, even if a little monotonous. Now he has to elocutionize, and his reciting is simply ridiculous. I tell him not to do so, that the simplest way he recites a poem is the best, but I don't make much fuss; for it is the learning of the poems that I want, and I can't change the wrong the teacher is doing. Last New Year's day, he recited as his gift to me, Carlyle's *Dawning Day*."

It was not only to the young that she was an inspiration, she was especially helpful to women of the middle and poorer class. She freed them from the tyranny of "they say," the tyranny of countless unnecessary forms of household drudgery, and the tyranny of dress. Paying as little regard to her

own dress and spending as little upon it as possible, yet always spotlessly neat and clean, she could teach by example, as well as precept, the folly of wasting time and money in aping changing fashions. She often expressed her wonder if the day would ever come when mothers would cease to spend their time making fine underclothes and elaborate outside ones for themselves and their children, wearing out their eyes over work which leaves no value behind, instead of dressing their little ones simply and inexpensively, placing the mind and its development above finery for the body, and taking infinite pains to find out from cultured scholars the best course of reading for their children, and then reading to them classical works over and over, rather than allowing them to read a quantity of trash.

"I am always thankful," she says, "that I was a farmer's daughter, one of many children, and when growing up, could only have simple dresses and only what I needed. I am glad, too, that I never afterwards developed a love of fine and costly dressing, for it would have taken all my income and made me a very selfish woman. So, you see, that though I have my legacy of misfortune in my extreme deafness, I have had great blessings of which I am conscious. I have a hatred of show and shams, a foolish craving for affection, and a deep regret for loss

of time in my young days. There was so little reading done, almost none by those who went to public school. The teachers were illiterate, as are so many teachers now. But I learned the beauty of simplicity through one rare woman of high culture who has been hanging in a conspicuous place on the walls of my memory ever since. Was not that wonderful woman a teacher of all who saw her as she walked about town? There have been many other gifted and noble women who set the fashion of plain dressing, as she did. Was not Lydia Maria Child one of those women? I have always greatly admired her character, and wish that we had had many such among us."

Just as she deplored the waste of time on dress, so she deplored the minute attention given to housekeeping at the expense of time and health. The ironing of sheets, towels, and underwear she thought not only a stupid waste of time, but a real loss under the iron of the sweet freshness which the air gives to them, as they hang out-of-doors. "I have no respect for faultless housekeeping," she declared. "I see it too often preferred to training children rightly and reading to them early. Polishing the mind is better than polishing the furniture. It is easy to keep things in place and so have the house orderly. I don't like a disorderly house, but better a little



dust on floors and furniture than on the mind. Better make a girl's underclothing of coarse unbleached cotton, with the fewest stitches and no trimming, and have time for reading to her, beginning before the alphabet is learned."

However, in spite of this seeming severity of taste, she was, as she herself said, an extravagant admirer of beautiful things in nature and art. "I can hardly see a thing of rare beauty in a store, within my power to buy, that I can leave unpurchased, although I give it away to gratify my love of giving, to any one I love. A room with a fine prospect of sky, mountain, and water charms me more than the most elegant furniture. I enjoy seeing a woman finely dressed, if her dress, as Spencer says, is simple without effort; and on the other hand, a dress, as he expresses it, tawdry, discordant in colors, bad from over-decoration, offends my eye. I enjoy color in natural objects. I dislike bright colors in dress. I do dislike cheap bric-a-brac, cheap pictures and crowded rooms, pillow-shams, sofa pillows, piles of them, and now, these short sleeves tied with ribbons or bows,—and needless ribbons on children's hair.

"A friend took me through her house the other day, and I felt at home in it. I thought it had never before impressed me as being so simple and attractive. I praised it, which I do not remember having

done before. Afterward she said to me: 'How do you like the way the furniture is covered?' There was the secret of the change! The old worn, stuffed coverings of sofa and chairs had been taken off, and a covering like leather had been substituted. The old woolen carpets were removed, and a pretty, little-figured straw matting was on the floor, through which the dust could not go. I had not understood why the little house impressed me as it had not done before, until my friend asked me how I liked the change. A crowded room is not restful to me, nor a room set apart for especial occasions. I like that line from the Talmud, 'Use your best vase to-day, for to-morrow it may be broken.' I am old enough to remember the shut-up parlor in country places, only opened on rare occasions. What dull places they were!"

I should do this admirable woman a great injustice if, in laying stress upon her calm, beautiful seriousness, I should neglect to speak of her quick sense of humor, of the ready, ringing laugh which always accompanied her perception of real fun. "What I miss with people in daily life," she writes, "is a little humor. How it rests one! How shallow is one who is all gayety! how dull one who is all seriousness!" It was her quick sense of humor that made her so delightful a companion, and saved her

from the obsession of fixed ideas and that painful weight of gravity which often accompany learning. "Nothing," says Scott, "is so tiresome as walking through some beautiful scene with a minute philosopher, a botanist or pebble gatherer, who is eternally calling you from the grand features of the natural scenery to look at grasses and chucky stones!"

Nor is there anything more tiresome than the naturally slow and stupid, and naturally sentimental woman who vaguely perceives that there is an aristocracy of intellect really worth while, but who does not know that one must be born into it and cannot marry into it or study one's self into it; and whose one object in life is therefore to "learn something," whose praise of anything beautiful or fine always concludes with, "It is so instructive!" This woman is absolutely incapable of judgments and admirations at first hand, but is wholly dependent upon lectures, guide books, and clubs for her ideas and her course of reading. Our valiant woman never belonged to a club or any kind of a "society" in her life. She valued her freedom too highly, and needed no guide to the best. She had no sympathy with the strenuous imitators of the intellectual life, for she saw that vanity and not real love of learning is the incentive to their effort. Far above all these external trappings of learning, she counted the edu-



cation of heart and hand, the swift sympathy, the natural kindness, the deft and busy fingers that create order and cleanliness around them. Uncomplaining and with infinite patience, she took upon herself some lowly task neglected by those of whom she rented her room, sweeping and scrubbing the dirty stairs, washing everybody's dirty dishes in the kitchen used by several women in common, and keeping it sweet and clean. "It is good for me. I need the exercise. I really don't mind it." These were her constant replies to those who knew that she was doing the work of shirkers. But there was that in her character that did not lend itself to imposition. Even the shirkers knew that, and never took her services as their right. They felt and acknowledged her superiority, her shrinking from what is base and common, her utter refusal to take any part in the malicious tattle of gossip-lovers. "I am extremely democratic," she once said of herself, "but with all that, I have another fiber in my nature. In a way, I like to keep a certain aloofness from the many. How I hate to become common by a too close touch with the multitude! How few compared with the great majority are true, clear-headed, truthful, simple, kind, unselfish, and not gossiping. I have never been inclined to take prejudices, but when I find a woman untruthful, false, malicious, I want a high

wall between her and me. Women who are not readers are apt to make people and their affairs the subject of conversation. Had I my own little house, there are fewer and fewer I should like to take into it as companions. Some, not readers, think over and over little things one says, that should pass away with the hour in which they were said, and would do so, if fresh thoughts were continually coming into the mind from fine books; and so with them there is not the freedom of long talk."

Mingling, then, with all sorts of common people, yet not of them, but in no way separating herself from them, except by not sharing their sordidness of thought, she won their love and respect, and gave them a sweet, indulgent affection in return. Absolutely without personal vanity, she was nobly proud in her own peculiar way. She could not too quickly or too freely share all her pleasures, but her sufferings she kept to herself. During the last years of her life, she had severe and frequent attacks of angina pectoris, and often could not walk a block without painful constriction of chest and arm. One day, she had ten such excruciating attacks; but no one except her physician and one trusted friend knew anything about it, and when she was congratulated on an appearance of health, she only answered with a quiet smile that was interpreted as a sign of

acquiescence. Yet she knew that hers was only a case of physical endurance, and she grew familiar with the face of death in those hours of awful struggle. When illness came upon her, she went quietly to some hospital where she could have good care, and on her recovery might mention it or not, as occasion arose to comment upon some new phase of her life. "Our heaviest burdens must rest on our own shoulders," she said; and her burdens never rested elsewhere. "I miss much that I had in the hospital," she wrote of one such experience,— "the human sunshine in the smiles of the young women nurses, the young mothers who have borne little ones, — although they usually leave two weeks after the great event which they came to the hospital to await." And again she writes: "The dear Catholic sisters! I love them! I would say naught against Catholicism. In fact, I like it better than the hard creeds of many Protestants; some of the hardest, most evil-minded women I have ever met were of the latter faith, rejoicing that they had been converted, and so saved from future damnation."

This remarkable reticence in private suffering had the natural result of creating about her a fictitious atmosphere of invulnerability. She seemed set apart from human weaknesses in an atmosphere of perpetual calm. It was impossible to think of her as



growing old, as poor, isolated, or lonely in any way. She seemed the one woman of infinite resources, large leisure, and deep, calm happiness. The secret of it all was that she had found what Renan calls "*l'ineffable joie du renoncement à la joie*" (the ineffable joy of the renunciation of joy).

With a very small income, she contrived to be not only never in debt, but to be the most generous of generous women. She had a passion for giving, and a passionate reluctance to receive, and she indulged her passion most freely to those whom she loved, but made it impossible for them to give her anything. Her wants were reduced to such a nakedness of absolute necessities, that every gift to her was a superfluity which she gladly and quickly passed on to some one to whom it seemed a necessity or was the source of pleasure. Apropos of gifts, she writes:

"I must confess a weakness that you not long ago acknowledged. When an acquaintance, one not my superior, gives me anything, I want to make some return. This is wrong. It is ill-treating the giver, showing a certain disrespect, as if I should say: 'You have no right to give me anything. I must give back your gift in some form.' Lafcadio Hearn says in one of his books: 'I remember having once been severely chided by a hoary friend of mine, a white-bearded Mentor, because I had received a present

from a friend, and had impulsively exclaimed: "Do tell me what I shall give him in return." "Give him in return?" quoth Mentor. "What for? To destroy your little obligation of gratitude? to insult your friend by practically intimating that you believe he expected something in return? Don't send him anything save thanks."

"I have little of the sentiment that many women have. To some, a gift is as sacred as the heart of a friend. To me it is only the expression of a wish to give a little pleasure. The merit of this is the giving and receiving. It is purely immaterial, so it cannot be given to another, although the gift can. The gift of love is the gift I prize. Material ones have positively no value in comparison. So I often give the latter away, as you know. But how my heart would feel the loss of the former, which I never would part with at any price!"

There was one form of giving, however, which she rarely practiced and which she heartily disliked, and that was Christmas giving. She recognized in it a mere custom, a forced, spasmodic generosity, a conventionality in which the heart has little or no part; nay, more, a custom which has become a heavy and hateful tax upon many people, compelling them to useless extravagances which they bitterly regret but are too weak to renounce; and with her perfect

courage on its background of boundless generosity, she could say:

"What a mad frenzy there is at Christmas time! These days are as quiet to me as if there were no Christmas. I may give to some who cannot return the gift, but *I never exchange presents.*" I have italicized the last four words, for the quiet sentence with its delightful irony deserves emphasis. It sums up in a nutshell the character of an immense part of the spirit of Christmas giving.

Nor was she inclined to look much more favorably on the gastronomic parade of Thanksgiving day. "It is Thanksgiving," she writes. "I don't care a straw for the conventional dinner that is thought to belong to the day. The masses seem, then, to consider the belly a god to whom they must bring offerings. I turn away from all this. A postcard came this morning with a big turkey filling one side, with two gayly dressed, very happy-looking children in a little cart hitched to it, and above — '*Good wishes for Thanksgiving.*' The children are the drivers. Yes, that is Thanksgiving to most of us. I think it cruel to have women sitting on the street begging money for a big charity dinner for the poor, placing in the memory for life the experience of eating as a mendicant child at such a table. Had I ever had such an experience in my childhood, I would give



one of my fingers could I have it erased; but I never would have regretted eating a crust of bread for a dinner on that day, if my parents could have afforded no better a dinner.

“Were I a mother of children to-day, I would try to give them the love of fine books early, and of choice things; then I would let them take their choice when they were old enough to hear of a special dinner on Thanksgiving day, between having such a dinner or having some fine picture, or book, or curio, or an outing to some interesting place not far off. I should feel that I had been lacking in my training of them, if they said, ‘Let us have the dinner.’ I always have my plainest dinner on this day and on Christmas.”

This habit was not the effect of a narrow asceticism, but was simply a sincere protest against the assumption that extravagance, dissipation, or envy represent the spirit of gratitude and reverence. It was real life driven into a corner looking out on a noisy masquerade, and calmly deciding that the play was immeasurably inferior to the real thing. For this brave woman had stripped life to the bone and found it sweetest there; sweetest in its absolute independence of artifice and make-believe, sweetest in its wholesome bareness, its dependence only on sun, and air, and soil, and loving human intercourse; and

the beautiful simplicity of her life, making no demands on others, while rendering them the noblest service, was in accordance with the highest ethical teaching that we have.

As I have said before, she troubled herself not at all over the unknown, but was content to live one life at a time. Without subscribing to any dogma or any creed, or associating herself with any sect, she was yet so interpenetrated with the most beautiful truths of Christianity, that the exquisite purity and renunciation of her life, its ever increasing helpfulness in acts of kindness and love, put to shame that of any professing Christian I have ever known. Life withers in many hearts the power to love, and thus often ages men and women in their prime; but her heart never grew old, never lost its power of deep and tender feeling, and so she herself seemed never to age. Her hair whitened, a few lines came into the sweet, grave face; the slender figure lost something of its roundness, but old age never bent it; she still walked erect and with an elastic step to the end. And the beautiful, bright, vivacious intellect kept its vigor to the last. Writing only a month before her death, in her seventy-seventh year, she says:

"I, too, was penetrated by the sunshine and the tranquillity of the outer world, and felt happy, very happy. I had a renewal of energy, and as I passed

along to the post office, and then to a restaurant, I was unconscious of walking."

Yet she knew perfectly well that she had entered the shadow of the great unknown, but it neither chilled nor frightened her. She disposed of a few things still in her possession, closed her account with life, and calmly waited for the end.

"I have no sentiment about the ashes of the human body. I have the feeling that the funeral of most persons should be very private, and especially so if one is not among kin, like myself. I early imbibed an aversion for public funerals. When I was young, so many attended such, whether there was any real friendship for the departed or not. How many times I have seen those attending try to get a position where they could see the mourners as they passed out of the house, and often heard remarks as to how the different ones felt. They did not realize that a grief can be too deep for tears. I wish my body after death to go to the undertaker's, none seeing it there; then it is to be cremated and the ashes to be put in some unmarked place to mingle directly with the soil, so that there can never be any removal, and never any gravestone. I have no more sentiment about my body than I should have about any garment I had worn, when burned to ashes because it was worn out."



She often expressed her dislike of monuments in graveyards, nor would she have the public be in a hurry to commemorate any man or woman in this way until time had tested whether what they had done to humanity were of any value or not. "I believe no public monument should be erected to any one until the man or woman has been dead fifty years. . . . Better to place the ashes of the dead on mountains which are accessible, and let the rains bear them down over their sides to be raised aloft by nature into blossoms and trees." Her wishes were respected. She died on the 4th of February, 1910, and her body was cremated.

Her sister wrote of her: "Content to live in the greatest simplicity herself, she could help a young woman through a university without wishing the recipient of her bounty to feel hampered. Surely her touch for money was one of rare delicacy, and the ring of gold and silver made beautiful music in its passage through her hands. Her manner of spending it was so fine. Then, too, there was a certain breadth of mind, which came perhaps from her extraordinary rectitude. There could have been very little change for her, as she passed on. She simply left the mortal tent."

This is not merely a beautiful expression of sisterly affection; it is the heartfelt sentiment of all

who knew her. She seemed exempt from the weaknesses of her sex, without in the slightest degree losing the charm of perfect womanliness. She had remarkable good sense, combined with a quick imagination and a keen appreciation of humor. She was capable of strong, tenacious attachments without silly sentimentality. "Passionate love quickly fades away," she remarked, "but friendship dies a hard death. Distance of time and space does not kill it. I do believe that marriage between a congenial pair is the ideal life; still, I would give my life as a teacher in preference to the wedded life." Men were strongly attracted to her, not only because of her rare good sense and tranquil cheerfulness, but because of the rare, subtle motherliness that enveloped her like a warm atmosphere. She, too, enjoyed her friendships with them, finding, on the whole, that they made more satisfactory comrades than women, and always maintained that, as a rule, they were franker, more genuinely tender, truer and more intellectual. As for herself, the large impersonal attitude that was hers, her calm acceptance of life's chagrins, the sweet graciousness with which she gave herself to all who were in the least degree worthy to know her, the magnetic effect of her goodness and her sincerity, made her an incomparable friend and companion. She fitted herself to you, as the glove to the hand.

She had lived among so many different people in so many different places and had become so singularly flexible and so beautifully broad and tolerant, that you could not shock her in any way, but could bare your soul's nakedness to her, and be not ashamed.

If the perfection of life be, as the greatest ethical teacher of our age, Leo Tolstoï, says, "the increase of love in the heart," then she came as near to that perfection as it is permitted us to come. She was a rare, heroic soul who gave much to others, and expected nothing in return, who never flinched on life's battle-field, nor paraded her wounds, nor bore defeat with less calm than if it had been victory, nor shirked a duty, nor omitted a kindness, and dying left to all who knew her a void in the heart which can never be filled.














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